

Your Developing Baby

The **first trimester** (the first 14 weeks) is a time of fast growth and development. It's also a time when your baby is most at risk from hazards such as smoking, alcohol, drugs, infection and X-rays. By the end of the first trimester, your baby will be the size of a lemon.

Your baby's brain really begins to develop during the **second trimester** (15 to 27 weeks) and will continue to do so until they're in their twenties. By the end of the second trimester, your baby will be the size of a sweet potato.

In the **third trimester** (28 weeks to birth), your baby is preparing to be born. Most can safely arrive after 36 weeks. At that point, your baby will be the size of a honeydew melon.

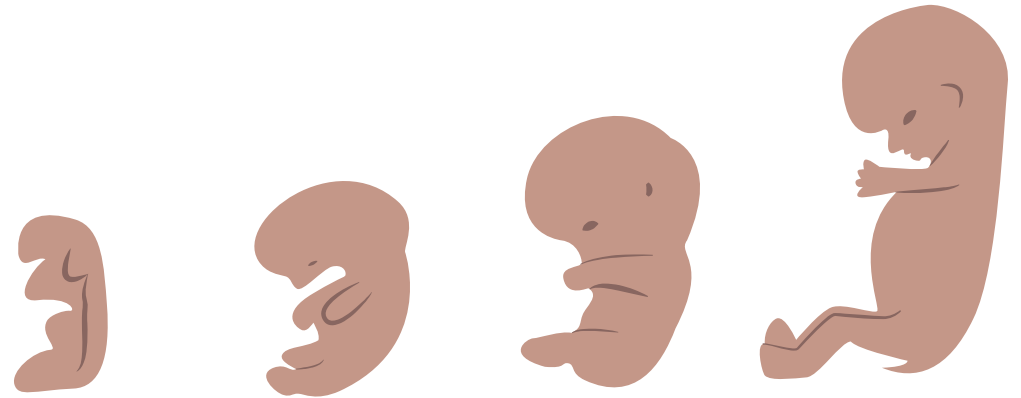
A baby born before 37 weeks is **preterm**.

A baby born between 37 and 39 weeks is **early term**.

A baby born between 39 and 41 weeks is **full term**.

A baby born between 41 and 42 weeks is **late term**.

A baby born at 42 weeks or later is **post term**.



First Trimester: 0 to 14 weeks

1 day – sperm and egg meet

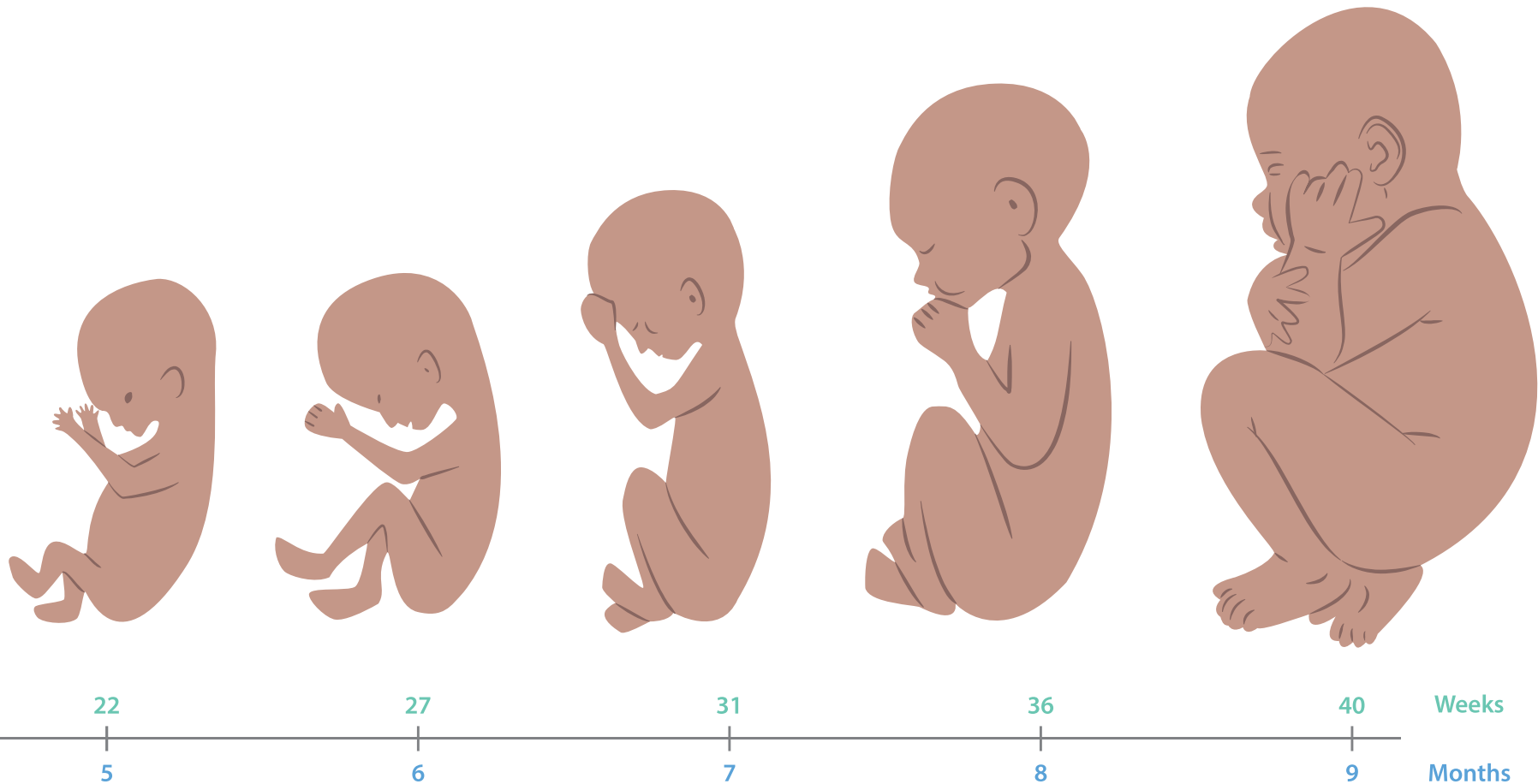
7 to 10 days – fertilized egg attaches to uterus; placenta begins to form

2 weeks – embryo forms on uterus wall; menstrual periods stop

4 weeks – eyes, ears, nose, spine, digestive tract and nervous system start to form; tube (future heart) starts beating

8 weeks – embryo becomes a fetus and has all organs; bones form

12 weeks – tooth buds, fingernails and genitals form; fetus can move but can't be felt; heartbeat may be heard by health care provider



Second Trimester: 15 to 27 weeks

- 16 weeks** – baby can hear your voice; you may feel them move
- 17 weeks** – immune system starts to develop as baby begins to store your antibodies
- 20 weeks** – downy hair covers body; eyebrows and lashes grow; first poop (“meconium”) appears in intestines
- 24 weeks** – breathing begins
- 26 weeks** – baby’s outline may be felt through your stomach

Third Trimester: 28 weeks to birth

- 28 weeks** – baby can store nutrients and hear and respond to sounds
- 32 weeks** – fat forms; sense of taste develops; eyes react to light
- 36 weeks** – body is plumper; skin is smooth and covered with pale, cheesy substance
- 40 weeks/full term** – male’s testicles are in scrotum; female’s external genitals are formed
- 40-42 weeks/late term** – soft spots (“fontanel”) on head get smaller; fat layer shrinks; skin is drier and looser