

THE PREGNANCY CARE CENTER

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Second Trimester Wellness

Health tips and milestone information for weeks 13–26

The second trimester (weeks 13–27) often brings relief from early pregnancy symptoms and allows you to enjoy feeling your baby move. This period is also important for maintaining healthy habits and monitoring your baby's development.

Fetal development and milestones

By weeks 18–20 you may feel your baby's first movements ("quickening"). During this trimester hair, nails, eyelashes and eyebrows grow, and by 28 weeks your baby's movements become more consistent【180678332368521†L70-L107】.

Common second-trimester symptoms

You may experience: * Increased appetite, weight gain and mild swelling of hands, feet or ankles. * Nosebleeds or nasal congestion and bleeding gums. * Skin changes such as the dark line on your abdomen (linea nigra) and darkening of the areolas. * Hemorrhoids, varicose veins, round ligament pain and stretch marks【180678332368521†L137-L158】. Most of these changes are normal, but discuss severe discomfort or swelling with your provider.

Healthy lifestyle tips

- **Nutrition:** Continue eating a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and low-fat dairy. You'll need about 340 extra calories per day in the second trimester and 450 extra calories in the third【887468589160528†L84-L92】.
- **Exercise:** Aim for about 20 minutes of moderate exercise daily. Walking and swimming are safe options; avoid contact sports or activities with a high risk of falling【180678332368521†L220-L253】.
- **Safety:** Avoid raw or undercooked meat and seafood, unpasteurized dairy, deli meats, high-mercury fish, hot tubs or saunas, smoking, alcohol and recreational drugs

【180678332368521†L220-L253】. Avoid cleaning cat litter to prevent toxoplasmosis and try to sleep on your side rather than flat on your back.

- **Prenatal care:** Keep regular appointments, take your prenatal vitamins and discuss any new symptoms with your provider.

When to contact your provider

Call your provider if you experience severe cramping or bleeding, difficulty breathing, sudden swelling, fever, contractions more than four times an hour or fluid leakage 【180678332368521†L255-L273】.

Sources

1. Cleveland Clinic: “Second trimester of pregnancy” 【180678332368521†L70-L273】.
2. Health.gov MyHealthfinder: “Pregnancy and nutrition – calorie needs” 【887468589160528†L84-L92】.