

## Decreased Fetal Movement and Kick Counts

Keith Merritt, MD

### Background

- Fetal movement begins in the first trimester (before 12 weeks)
- Mothers begin feeling movement around 18 – 22 weeks
  - Called “quickening”
  - Typically a flutter (like gas bubbles or a butterfly)
  - Earlier in women who have had a child & later in first pregnancies
- Mothers feel 50% of arm/leg movement & 80% of whole body movement
- Movement felt by the mother increases until 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester
  - The amount the fetus moves should not change after 24 weeks
  - However, type of movement may change (more rolls & fewer kicks)
- Movement typically increases through the day and is greatest late at night
- Fetal movement is an important indicator of fetal wellbeing after 24 weeks

### Decreased Movement

- 400 of 1000 women complain of decreased movement at some point
  - 3 – 4 of these will have a poor outcome
- Mothers may feel less movement when
  - they are busy and their attention is focused on other things
  - they smoke
  - they take a sedative

- they have not eaten
- the fetus is sleeping
- the placenta is located on the front of the uterus
- the fetus is laying with its back toward the front of the uterus
- Decreased movement may also mean the fetus is in trouble

### **When to Call your Doctor**

- **No movement is felt for 2 hours**
- **Decreased -but not absent- movement for 12 hours**

### **How to do Kick Counts**

- Drink a large glass of fruit juice
- Find an isolated place with no distraction
  - no electronic device, nothing to read & no one to talk with
- Lay on your left side and count movements for one hour
  - any movement, no matter how small, counts
- **Call your doctor or go to hospital if fewer than 6 movements in 1 hour**

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