



*Linda Sewell M.D.*

## **Excellence in Women's Healthcare** **Your Baby and Your Body During Pregnancy**

### **17-20 Weeks**

- **Baby:** your baby, now about in its 15<sup>th</sup> week of development, measures about 4.4 to 4.8 inches from crown to rump and has doubled in weight in the last two weeks to about 3.5 ounces. Fat begins to form, helping your baby's heat production and metabolism. The lungs are beginning to exhale amniotic fluid, and the circulatory and urinary systems are working. Hair on head, eyebrows and eyelashes is filling in.
- **At 18 weeks:** Your baby measure 5 to 5.6 inches form crown to rump and weighs about 5.25 ounces. The baby will suck if its lips are stroked and it can swallow, and even get the hiccups. The retinas have become sensitive to light, so if a bright light is shined on your abdomen, baby will probable move to shield its eyes.
- **Mom to be:** Your uterus, about the size of a cantaloupe, can probably be felt just below your navel. You're most likely feeling the baby move by now. A mid-pregnancy ultrasound may be performed between now and 22 weeks to assess fetal growth and development and to verify the due date. If the baby is in the right position, the ultrasound may even be able to determine whether it's a boy or girl. Your heart has to work 40 percent to 50 percent harder now to support your pregnancy.
- **Tips for the week:** To alleviate backaches, maintain good posture. Sit with a footstool or use an ergonomic chair at the office, avoid standing for too long, sleep with a small pillow under your side at the waist, and lift things with your legs instead of your back
- **Your baby:** Your baby starts a growth spurt in length and weight.
  - ❖ Hair begins to grow on the head and downy hair, called lanugo, begins to cover the baby's body. Eyebrows and eyelashes start to grow.

- ❖ The skin starts to fill out with fat.
- ❖ The kidneys make urine.
- ❖ Your baby enjoys moving about in the amniotic sac. You may feel the baby's movements by the end of week 20. The amniotic fluid increases.
- ❖ This marks the midpoint in your pregnancy.
- ❖ Baby will be about 10 inches long and weighs about  $\frac{3}{4}$  lb.

➤ **Your Body:**

- ❖ Your pregnancy is beginning to show. You may gain  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 lb a week (3 to 4 lbs by week 20). Your nipples, the area around them (areola). And the line on your abdomen (linea, nigra) will darken.
- ❖ Your placenta releases hormones that help to soften some of your joints and muscles to make labor and delivery easier.
- ❖ Your blood supply will increase from 3  $\frac{1}{2}$  quarts to 5  $\frac{1}{2}$  quarts by end of your pregnancy.
- ❖ You may be less tired.
- ❖ You start enjoying your pregnancy.
- ❖ You may be hungry more often, and you may feel cravings for some foods.
- ❖ The chance of getting a urinary tract infection may increase. Drink six to eight glasses of water each day.
- ❖ Your uterus will be just below your navel by the end of week 20.