

## Month-8



### Intro

Dear Mommy Birthing is a miracle and you are about to play a very special role in it! The months of hard work and patience are finally going to pay off. As you enter the 36th to 40th weeks you are about to invite a wonderful life into this world. Are you excited about your due date which will mark your child's birthday, forever? Are you ready to don the role of a "Mother", nurturing and supporting the all needs of your child? We are sure that your eagerness to become a mother is out for everybody to see. After all, you have managed successfully and reached the last month of your pregnancy! Read on to find out more about what to expect at this last crucial leg of your pregnancy.

### My birthday approaches

Mommy, I am really excited for the first birthday of my entire life! Even though i will not remember anything about it, it will be the most special birthday of my life. After all, on that day, I will be born into a world of whole lot of love.

All the eyes will be on me on the day of my birth, and I can't for us to be the center of attention on that day. I am sure you want to find out how I look now, just as much as I want to see your face for the first time. So, let me give you a sneak peek into my world, inside your body:

- From something that could hardly be identified as a human form, I have finally started resembling a baby. Do you want to find out if I look like you? You'll have to wait some more to find that out!
- I have a very round and soft body; I am the very picture of health and happiness. My skin is smooth now, as fat has filled in all my wrinkles. I am sure to get a lot of admiration for my cuteness, once I am born!
- Fine, silky hair no longer covers my entire body, although there could be some of it on my back and shoulders.
- A white creamy substance covers my skin. At birth, you will see some of it in my skin folds.
- The bones of my head are soft, but also firm enough to pass through your vagina without injuring it.
- My lungs have also finished growing in this final month.
- I can faintly see. I am also capable of identifying shapes and bright colours, although my favourite colours are black and white.
- My skin is soft and smooth. I continue to take on more and more fat, almost about 0.25 kg. per week.
- The structure of my backbone has been growing, over the last few weeks.
- I am learning to swallow, breathe and regulate my body temperature to a certain extent, but still very dependent on you for most of my bodily functions.
- I can also hear you now and love it when you talk and sing to me!

## Glossary of maternity

Mom, I know that you have probably read a hundred articles, to find out more about me and how I am going to meet you in the world. I love the attention that you constantly shower on me and want to gift you some crucial information, in return. So, read on!

**Lightening:** Mom, I love the fact that I am going to be your sweetheart!

However, let me tell you that babies, like me, have the tendency to move their head down into their mother's pelvis, about 2 to 3 weeks before birth. This process is called lightening.

During lightening, I shall rotate myself, so that I am ready to come out of your birth canal, in a downward-facing position. Don't worry, mom, as you will not experience lightening, until labour begins when you are expecting my younger siblings.

You can see if I am moving down by noticing the space between your breasts and abdomen. You will also experience the following, during lightening:

- Your breathing will become less laboured, as your lungs will have more room to expand.
- Your stomach will feel less crowded and upset.
- You will have easier bowel movements.

The only worry is that as my head presses on your bladder, you may feel more leg cramps. You may also get pain in your thighs and your pelvis might ache.

**Effacement:** As my head presses into your pelvis, your cervix, i.e. the opening of your uterus, becomes softer and thinner. This is called "Effacement". Effacement is measured in percentages. For example, your healthcare provider may tell you that you are effaced 50%, which means that you are half-way into being completely effaced. When you are 100% effaced, or completely effaced, your cervix becomes paper-thin. This means that you will soon experience labour pain.

**Labour:** Mommy, you will know when I am ready to be born, when you go into labour.

When in labour, the muscles of your uterus will tighten and release, and tighten again.

This movement follows that of the muscles of your arm when you relax and release.

This gradual squeezing of the muscles will finally push me out of your uterus.

Does that sound like a lot of hard work? Maybe, that's why, it's called "labour"

## More about labour

Mom, do you want to know more about labour? I am sure you do! So, let me tell you how to understand if you are in labour. You will know that you are in labour when:

- Fluids, including blood and a watery liquid, leak from your vagina.
- There is a change in the amount, colour or smell of your vaginal discharge.
- The plug of mucus that forms at the neck of your cervix, blocking your uterus and protecting me from bacteria, drops out. This is called the "show".
- You feel cramps in your belly that feel like your period is starting. You experience pressure in your pelvic area, below where I live.
- You get low and dull backache.
- You have pain in your thighs.
- You notice contractions by putting your hand on your belly. Such contractions get longer, stronger and closer together. To understand a contraction, rest your fingertips on your uterus. If you feel your uterus getting hard, from the top down, you are probably having a contraction. You can also feel mild pain, low in your back or in your thighs, during this time. Sometimes, it may also feel like I am balling up inside you.

When you suspect contractions, time them from the start of one to the start of the next.

Mom, I know it sounds like a lot to take on, but there is really nothing to worry about. Practise these good thoughts:

Your body is well-equipped to birth me and has been preparing for it, for months.

You will be in labour for only a few hours and not days on end.

When labour becomes painful, your body will release a natural drug. It helps to relieve pain and gives a sense of wellbeing.

Last, but not the least, labour pains mean that you are finally going to make meet. That should make you very happy. Mom, always remember that you have the complete support of your family, partner and doctor in this time. "