8 weeks - 12 weeks

During these weeks, your baby will grow from the size of a kidney bean to being 2 inches long (this is about the length of a lime).

Your baby will develop arms and legs, fingers, and toes. All your baby’s vital organs finish developing during this time period. Your baby also starts to grow fingernails and even hair! We can start to hear your baby’s heartbeat in the clinic around 10 to 12 weeks. You might notice your belly getting a little bigger; however, first-time moms often start showing later than moms who have had prior pregnancies.

Optional testing

First trimester screen/sequential screen – between 11 to 13 weeks
• Combination of a maternal blood test and an ultrasound measurement identifies the fetal risk for Down syndrome and Trisomy 18.
• Can be combined with a blood test between 15 to 20 weeks called MSAFP to detect problems with the spinal cord and brain, called neural tube defects.

Quad screen – between 15 to 20 weeks
• Maternal blood tests that identify the baby’s risk for Down syndrome, Trisomy 18, as well as problems with the spinal cord and brain, called neural tube defects.

Cystic Fibrosis – any time
• Maternal blood test to determine if you are a carrier for a lung disease called Cystic Fibrosis.
• Caucasians are at an increased risk (1 in 29 are a carrier).
• If mom tests positive, dad is tested. If dad is positive, baby has a 25 percent risk of having Cystic Fibrosis.
• All infants born in Missouri are screened for Cystic Fibrosis at birth through the State Newborn Screen.

Sickle Cell – any time
• Maternal blood test to determine if you are a red blood cell disorder called Sickle Cell.
• African Americans are at an increased risk (1 in 12 are a carrier).
• If mom tests positive, dad is tested. If dad is positive, baby has a 25 percent risk of having Sickle Cell disease.
• All newborn infants born in the state of Missouri are tested for red blood cell abnormalities through the State Newborn Screen.

Follow up tests
If any of the above tests are positive, your provider will talk with you about additional diagnostic testing such as the cell free DNA blood test, chorionic villus sampling, or amniocentesis.
• Genetic counseling services are available and may be recommended if there is a history of genetic problems, advanced maternal age, drug exposure, or positive screening tests.

Common physical symptoms during pregnancy

Nausea, morning sickness
• Eat frequent small meals with protein plus carbohydrates.
• Drink plenty of water.
• Avoid triggers, such as certain smells.
• Try eating ginger or sipping on ginger ale.
• Try Sea Bands, which use acupressure points on your wrist.
• Ask your provider about Unisom and B6 at bedtime.
• If you are unable to keep anything down for 24 hours, contact your health care provider.

Vaginal discharge
• Increased discharge is normal; contact your health care provider if there is itching or an odor.

Other discomforts
• Fatigue
• Frequent urination
• Breast tenderness
• Nasal congestion, bleeding gums, increased saliva, and increased sense of smell
• Heartburn, constipation, gas, and hemorrhoids
• Mood swings, unusual dreams

Sex - Is it safe?
• Sex is safe during pregnancy but contact your health care provider if you experience pain, discomfort, or heavy bleeding.
• Sexual desire may fluctuate during pregnancy.
• As your baby grows, avoid putting pressure on your abdomen during sex.
• Slight vaginal spotting may occur after sex, but if this lasts more than a day or becomes heavy like a period, contact your health care provider.

Warning signs – call your health care provider if you experience any of the following:
• Severe abdominal pain
• Vaginal bleeding or fluid leaking from the vagina
• Severe lower back pain
• Fever higher than 100.4 degrees
• Severe headache or dizziness
• Persistent nausea or vomiting for 24 hours without food or drink