



Stillbirth Prevention Fact Sheet

Research published in AJOG and BJOG demonstrates that expectant parents who utilize *Count the Kicks* have better birth outcomes. This fact sheet includes up-to-date information on stillbirth in the U.S., the importance of fetal movement monitoring, and how to use the *Count the Kicks* program.

What is *Count the Kicks*?

Count the Kicks is an evidence-based stillbirth prevention program that teaches expectant parents the method for and importance of monitoring their baby's movements daily during the third trimester of pregnancy. *Count the Kicks* helps expectant parents get to know their baby's normal movement patterns, and empowers them to contact their healthcare provider right away if there is a change in what's normal for their baby. The goal of *Count the Kicks* is to lower the country's stillbirth rate and save babies across the nation. [\[Source\]](#)

When should expectant parents begin using *Count the Kicks*?

American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends expectant parents begin monitoring movement daily in the third trimester, which begins at the 28th week. Expectant parents who are high risk or pregnant with multiples should start monitoring at 26 weeks. [\[Source\]](#)

Why is it important to track a baby's movements in the third trimester?

The CDC lists a change in a baby's movements as one of its 15 urgent maternal warning signs. Research shows a change in baby's movement can sometimes be the earliest or only sign that a baby may be in distress and is an indication that both mom and baby should be evaluated by a healthcare provider right away. By counting their baby's movements, expectant parents can get to know what is normal for their baby, which makes them more alert to potential red flags. [\[Source\]](#)

How do you *Count the Kicks*?

Starting in the third trimester (28 weeks, or 26 weeks if you are high-risk or pregnant with multiples):

1. Monitor your baby's movements daily with the FREE [Count the Kicks app](#) (available in 20+ languages), web-based counter, or download a *Count the Kicks* paper chart.
2. Count your baby's movements (kicks, pokes, jabs, rolls and swishes) every day — preferably at the same time.
3. Time how long it takes your baby to get to 10 movements.
4. After your baby reaches 10 movements, rate the strength of your baby's movements, with 1 being fluttery and 5 being fierce.
5. After a few days, you will begin to see the average length of time it takes your baby to get to 10 movements.
6. Call your provider right away if you notice a change in the strength of your baby's movements or how long it takes your baby to get to 10 movements. [\[Source\]](#)

What is considered normal?

Every baby is different. By completing daily movement monitoring sessions, expectant parents can get to know what is normal for their baby. If there is a significant change in the strength of a baby's movements or how long it takes a baby to get to 10 movements, expectant parents should call their healthcare provider right away or go directly to the hospital for evaluation. [\[Source\]](#)

Is *Count the Kicks* proven to improve birth outcomes?

Research demonstrates that expectant parents who utilize *Count the Kicks* have better birth outcomes. *BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* published research that shows a more than 30% reduction in Iowa's stillbirth rate in the first 10 years of the *Count the Kicks* stillbirth prevention program at a time when America's stillbirth rate remained stagnant. The results have led researchers to call for urgent action to address the stillbirth crisis in the U.S. and to study *Count the Kicks* on a national level. [\[Source\]](#)





Stillbirth Prevention Fact Sheet

Who created the the *Count the Kicks* program?

Count the Kicks is a project of *Healthy Birth Day, Inc.*, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to the prevention of stillbirth. *Healthy Birth Day* was founded by five Iowa moms who all lost daughters to stillbirth or infant death in the early 2000s. After being connected through friends and their community, a strong bond quickly formed between the women, and they decided to channel their grief into stillbirth prevention efforts to keep other families from experiencing the pain of losing a baby. [\[Source\]](#)

Is the *Count the Kicks* program based on research?

Count the Kicks is based on public health research in Norway that demonstrated a 30% reduction in stillbirth by teaching pregnant women how to monitor fetal movement during the third trimester of pregnancy by doing daily movement monitoring sessions. [\[Source\]](#)

What is stillbirth?

Stillbirth is defined as the loss of a baby during pregnancy at 20 weeks or greater gestation. [\[Source\]](#)

Is stillbirth really still a concern in the U.S.?

- Sadly, yes. Around 20,000 babies are lost to stillbirth every year in the U.S. [\[Source\]](#)
- 1 out of every 183 births in the U.S. ends in stillbirth. [\[Source\]](#)
- The health of a mom and the health of her baby are intrinsically connected. More than 15% of maternal deaths within 42 days of delivery occur in women who experienced a stillbirth. [\[Source\]](#)
- Research shows that the risk of severe maternal morbidity is more than four times higher among stillbirth deliveries compared with live births. [\[Source\]](#)

Who is most at risk of losing a baby to stillbirth? [\[Source\]](#)

- Differences in stillbirth outcomes persist. Data shows that a disproportionate number of babies are born still to Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Black, and American Indian or Alaska Native families.
- Expectant parents in some age groups, geographic locations, and those expecting multiples also face an increased risk of stillbirth.
- Visit the [stillbirth facts](#) page on our website to learn more about the communities most at risk of experiencing the tragedy of stillbirth.

What are the biggest risk factors for stillbirth? [\[Source\]](#)

- Maternal age (age 35 or over)
- Black/African American race/ethnicity
- Previous pregnancy loss, miscarriage, or stillbirth
- Low socioeconomic status
- Pregnancy complications (high blood pressure, diabetes, infections, etc.) [\[Source\]](#)
- Pregnancy with twins, triplets or other multiples
- Using assisted reproductive technology [\[Source\]](#)
- Tobacco, marijuana or alcohol use during or just before pregnancy

What does the latest research say about stillbirth prevention?

- The latest research indicates that expectant parents should pay attention to the strength of their baby's movements, and notify their healthcare provider right away if they notice a change in the strength of their baby's movements. [\[Source\]](#)
- Expectant parents should always sleep on their side, as research shows this is the best position for mom and baby. [\[Source\]](#)
- Research shows 1 in 4 stillbirths can be prevented. [\[Source\]](#)





Stillbirth Prevention Fact Sheet

Is *Count the Kicks* recommended by any maternal healthcare organizations?

- *Count the Kicks* has been designated a Best Practice by the Association of Maternal Child Health Programs (AMCHP). [\[Source\]](#)

What resources does *Count the Kicks* provide for maternal healthcare professionals?

- Thanks to the generous support of our partners, *Count the Kicks* educational materials are FREE in more than 35 states and available for a low-cost in all other states. [\[Order Materials\]](#)
- Printable counting charts (available in more than 20 languages) make movement monitoring accessible for those who don't have access to a mobile device or reliable Wi-Fi. [\[Printable Charts\]](#)
- Digital How to Count flyers (available in 20 languages) are a great compliment to our printed educational materials, and can be shared with expectant parents via text or email. [\[Digital Education\]](#)

What is the impact of the the *Count the Kicks* campaign?

- Iowa's stillbirth rate went down 32% from 2008-2018 while rates in the rest of the country remained relatively stagnant. [\[Source\]](#)
- Our website has 180 baby saves stories from families in 40 states and 9 countries who have written in to share how the *Count the Kicks* program helped their baby to have a healthy birth outcome. [\[Source\]](#)
- For at least 15 of those families, the mom says her own life was saved, too. [\[Source\]](#)
- Research shows 25% of stillbirths are potentially preventable. This means stillbirth prevention efforts could save 5,000 babies in the U.S. every year. [\[Source\]](#)

What are the other benefits of *Count the Kicks*?

- Monitoring baby's movements helps expectant parents to bond with their baby. Taking time to *Count the Kicks* provides parents with a special time each day to focus on their baby's movements and personality.
- Movement monitoring is an opportunity to invite a partner or older children to share in this experience and bond with the baby.
- 77% of App Users report that using the *Count the Kicks* app helped to reduce their anxiety about the well-being of their baby. [\[Source\]](#)
- 84% of App Users report that using the *Count the Kicks* app helped to increase their feelings of bonding and connection with their baby. [\[Source\]](#)

What factors contribute to differences in birth outcomes?

Research from the American College of Gynecology (ACOG) shows there are several contributing factors to health disparities in stillbirth. [\[Source\]](#) Researchers point to the following as causes for the differences:

- Epigenetics explains how early experiences, both positive and negative, can have lifelong impacts. This type of scientific research shows how environmental influences can affect the expression of genes. [\[Source\]](#)
- Expectant parents of color are more predisposed to conditions like gestational diabetes and preeclampsia.
- Lack of access to healthcare can impact early concerns or diagnosis of conditions and treatment.
- Rural Americans are at greater risk for poor outcomes. According to a 2024 March of Dimes report, over 35% of U.S. counties lack birthing
- facilities or obstetric clinicians, affecting over 2.3 million women of reproductive age. [\[Source\]](#)
- Socioeconomic barriers.
- Education is NOT a determining factor. [\[Source\]](#)

What is your organization doing to reach those communities most at risk of experiencing stillbirth?

Our ultimate goal is to make meaningful, sustainable, and systemic change that leads to a world where the impacts of age, ability, access to healthcare, ethnicity, geography, race, or socioeconomic status are no longer predictors of stillbirth. To do this we are working alongside non-clinical supporters to build relationships with trusted sources in the communities most impacted by stillbirth. These include birth workers, childbirth educators, community centers, doulas, faith leaders, libraries and salons.





Stillbirth Prevention Fact Sheet

NOT TRUE: Common Misconceptions About Baby's Movement in Pregnancy

My baby is always active. Why should I take time to *Count the Kicks*?

Even active babies can experience distress, sometimes quickly and without other warning signs. Monitoring your baby's movement every day takes the guesswork out of knowing if a normally active baby has slowed down. *Count the Kicks* gives you real data to show your healthcare provider if you have a concern. [\[Source\]](#)

Is movement monitoring recommended if I have a low-risk pregnancy?

ALL expectant parents should be educated on *Count the Kicks* and get to know what's normal for their baby, even if you are not high-risk. [\[Source\]](#)

What is considered normal? Should I expect to get a certain number of movements in 1 or 2 hours?

Every baby and every pregnancy are different. Research has moved away from the idea that expectant parents should expect a certain number of movements in a specific period of time. Instead, current research indicates expectant parents should work to understand the normal amount of time each day it takes their baby to get to 10 movements each day. [\[Source\]](#)

Why do I need to *Count the Kicks* when I can hear his or her heartbeat with a Doppler device?

A change of the baby's heartbeat is one of the last things that occurs when a baby is in distress. A change in a baby's movement may indicate potential problems before actual changes in the heart rate are detected. Expectant parents should only use a Doppler device under the guidance of a healthcare provider. [\[Source\]](#)

Should I drink something cold or eat something sugary to get my baby moving?

NO! Research has moved away from the idea that sugary drinks and the like are a good way to get baby to move. A baby's movement is best monitored without interventions like juice, candy, etc. If a baby isn't moving like normal, expectant parents should get checked right away. [\[Source\]](#)

Do babies kick less or run out of room near the end of pregnancy?

NO! Babies don't run out of room at the end of pregnancy. The types of movements may change (more jabs, fewer rolls), but babies should move up to and even during labor. If an expectant parent is monitoring their baby's movements at the same time each day, it should take about the same amount of time to feel 10 movements. [\[Source\]](#)

Can I use *Count the Kicks* if I have an anterior placenta?

Yes! Research shows that fetal movement counting times are similar to other placental locations from 24 weeks gestation and on. We recommend sitting or lying down in a comfortable position and taking time to really focus on your baby's movement while using the FREE *Count the Kicks* app. For additional advice on monitoring movement with an anterior placenta, talk with your provider. [\[Source\]](#)



Count the Kicks is a project of Healthy Birth Day, Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the prevention of stillbirth through education, advocacy and research.



The FREE *Count the Kicks* app is available in 20+ languages in the iOS and Google Play app stores. For more information please visit CountTheKicks.org.

Help Save Babies With Us!

Count the Kicks is the leading resource for tracking fetal movement in the third trimester of pregnancy. We are working to reduce the country's stillbirth rate and save babies across the nation. If you are interested in using our evidence-based education and images to raise awareness about *Count the Kicks*, please contact us to request a licensing agreement to use our educational program's information and resources. To get started, contact us at info@CountTheKicks.org.