

## Patient information – Reduced foetal movements

When we talk of ‘foetal movements’, we mean both the ‘major’ movements of the foetus – such as kicking and trunk movements – and the lesser movements, such as fluttering and swishing movements.

Most commonly, women begin to be aware of foetal movements from the 18th to 20th week of pregnancy. However, it can happen that movements are felt as early as the 15th or 16th week – or, equally, that movements are not noticed until much later in the pregnancy.

Over a 24-hour period, the foetus alternates between periods of activity and periods of rest. There are no foetal movements during the periods of sleep, which occur regularly throughout the day and last for around 20–40 minutes at a time.

Foetal movements are noticed more often when lying down than when sitting or standing, and more often during the evening. It is not clear whether this is due to the foetus really moving around more during the evening or when the woman is lying down, or whether it is simply because it is easier to concentrate and really sense things properly when you are in a relaxed state.

### **What is meant by reduced foetal movements?**

*‘A perception of a noticeable reduction in foetal movements compared with how it felt before, and where this perception must have lasted for more than two hours.’*  
After the 28th week of pregnancy, a guideline may be: *fewer than ten movements in two hours.*

### **What should I do if there has been a reduction in foetal movements?**

Start by lying on your side and really trying to feel them. Note the time. How many movements do you feel over 1–2 hours?

If you feel that there really has been a reduction in foetal movements compared with how it felt before, or there are no movements at all, and this situation has lasted for more than two hours, you should get in touch with the healthcare services for a check-up. During office hours on weekdays, you should initially contact your antenatal clinic, or the antenatal clinic at Växjö Central Hospital. The telephone number is: 0470- 58 32 11. In the evenings and at weekends, you should contact the Delivery Coordinator on 0470-58 83 82 for information on where to go. Don’t wait until the next day!

If you have any particular risk factor (e.g. high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, smoking or a previous pregnancy complication), it is particularly urgent that you should seek medical care in the event of reduced foetal movements as described above.