



Time to Talk...

PREGNANCY JOURNEY

MARINA FOGLE & DR CHIARA HUNT

The sisters explain what to expect during those special 40 weeks

Your pregnancy is split by the medical world into three trimesters. Even though pregnancy lasts nine months, it's calculated in weeks, with 40 weeks being the finish line. This is actually a bit misleading, as it's dated from the first day of your last period, so by the time you find out you're pregnant, you're already often about four weeks gone.

The first trimester lasts until the end of week 12 and is when most of baby's development takes place. A heartbeat can be detected from six weeks, and by 10 weeks, all the vital organs are formed. By 12 weeks, your baby has a complete skeleton and will begin to move around, although you won't be able to feel this.

Although you can have scans earlier, the first routine scan at 12 weeks is vital. It checks the baby's development and, when combined with a blood test, will estimate the likelihood of

chromosomal abnormalities. As miscarriage before 12 weeks is common, most people wait until they've had this scan before sharing the news. As exciting as finding out you're pregnant can be, the first trimester is often the hardest. Sickness is common, and you're likely to be feeling exhausted. Considering the amount of developing your baby is doing, it's no surprise – so don't feel guilty if you need to have rests throughout the day.

The second trimester is when most women start to feel amazing, but your body is still working hard. Your bump might start to show at around 16 weeks, but for many women it's much later. At around 17 to 20 weeks, you may begin to feel your baby moving. Initially, this will feel like little flutters, but they'll gradually build to become quite strong. By 20 weeks, your baby can hear noises outside the womb and by week 26, he can blink and is able

to see light and dark.

The 20th week is when you have your next important scan. The anomaly scan will check the baby's development and organs in more detail.

The third trimester is all about the baby putting on weight and as this happens, you will have to start slowing down. By week 32, your baby's senses will be fully developed and you'll notice his movements changing as the space gets tighter. A good thing to remember is that your baby is term from 37 weeks, so you should be ready for the arrival from then, but most first-time babies are born closer to 41 weeks so it might be a waiting game! **11**

Marina Fogle and Dr Chiara Hunt run antenatal classes in central and west London. Their book, *The Bump Class; An Expert Guide to Pregnancy, Birth & Beyond* is available now. thebumpclass.com.

OUR TOP TIPS

- It's important to look after yourself from the moment you find out you are pregnant. Studies show that nutrition is key in the first trimester, so eat healthily and avoid alcohol from the moment you know.
- Don't let the glow of the second trimester fool you into thinking you will be able to work until your due date. Most women we meet are ready to stop work by around 36 weeks.
- Resist the urge to fixate too much on your due date. Only three per cent of babies are born on this date. In France, the due date is 41 weeks, as baby is more likely to arrive closer to then. That said, be prepared from 37 weeks.