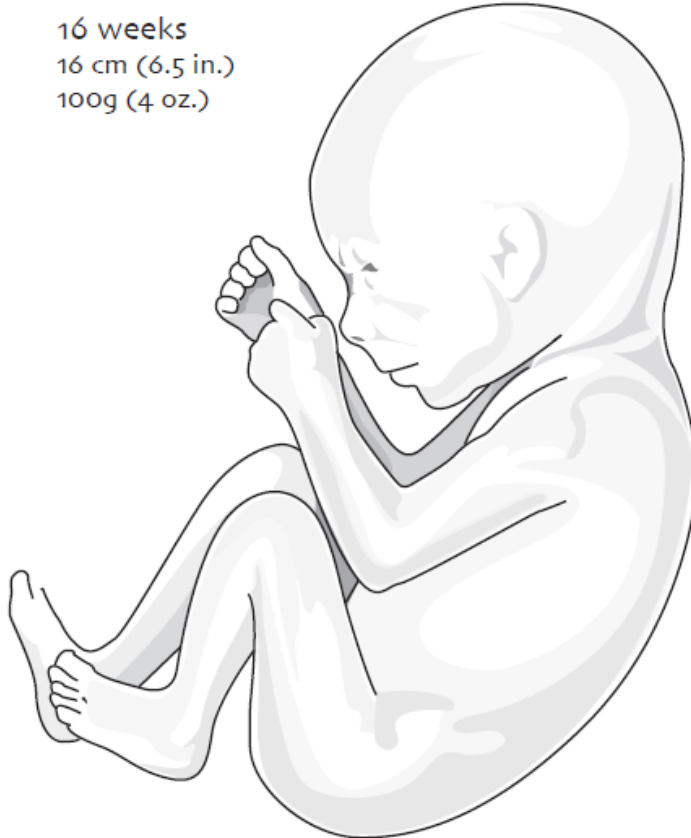


The Second Trimester

During the second trimester, or the second three months of the fetus's life, the brain develops considerably. In fact, most of the brain's development occurs during the period from now until 18 months after birth. During the second trimester, though, the fetus cannot live outside the mother's body because its respiratory and cardiovascular systems are not developed enough.

16 weeks
16 cm (6.5 in.)
100g (4 oz.)



The face looks more human, the head has hair, and the ears stand out. Between the eighteenth and twentieth weeks, the fetal heart can first be heard with a stethoscope. The baby's movements may be felt by the mother. (The mother may not feel the baby's movements until 18 to 20 weeks, especially with the first pregnancy.)

17 weeks

The baby begins to store some of the mother's antibodies, which slowly increase until birth.

20 weeks
25 cm (10in.)
300 g (10 oz.)

Eyebrows and eyelashes appear. A fine downy hair (lanugo) appears all over the baby's body and may still be present at birth. The baby's skin is thin, shiny and covered with a creamy protective coating called vernix. Oil glands appear. The baby's legs lengthen, and the baby can move its legs well. Teeth develop - enamel and dentine are being deposited (can begin as early as 14 weeks). (By the end of the fifth month, the baby is about half the length of a newborn baby.)

* adapted from *Baby's Best Chance*, 5th Edition, Province of B.C.

24 weeks
30 cm (12 in)
600 g (1.25 lb.)

Sweat glands form. The baby has a lean body. The baby's skin is red and wrinkled. Primitive breathing movements begin. A substance called surfactant is formed in the lungs. This substance helps the lungs to expand normally after the baby is born.



26 weeks

The baby's outline may be felt through the mother's abdomen. The eyes may be open now.