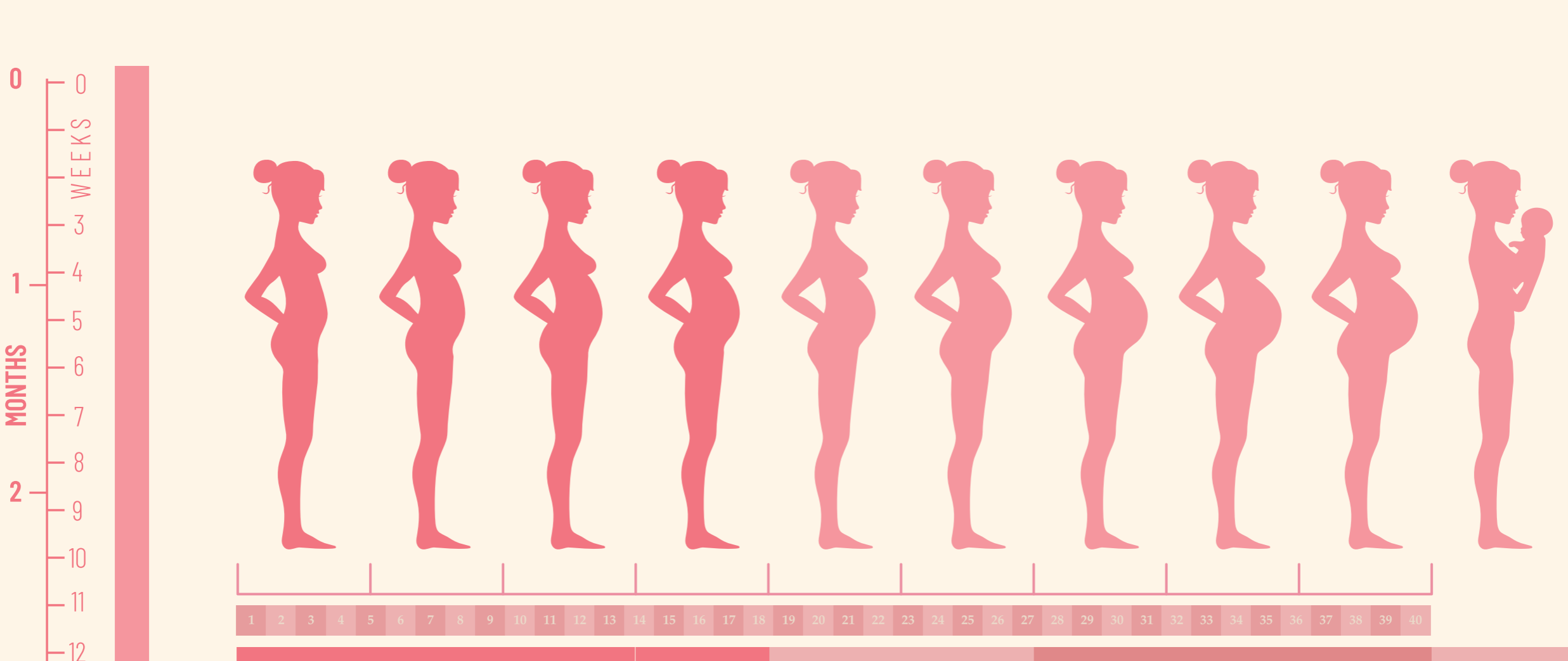


Your pregnancy week by week: weeks 17 & 18



It could be wind, but those strange sensations in **your tummy could be your baby moving**. You won't be able to tell what your baby is up to right now. However, **you may soon be feeling every kick, punch, hiccup, and somersault**.

You'll find information on everything from what's going on inside your body to **how your baby is developing at weeks 17 and 18**, as well as tips and advice on **how to have a healthy pregnancy**, right here. Enjoy your reading!



Week 17

The 17th Week of Pregnancy

What is happening with your baby at 17 weeks pregnant^{1,2}?

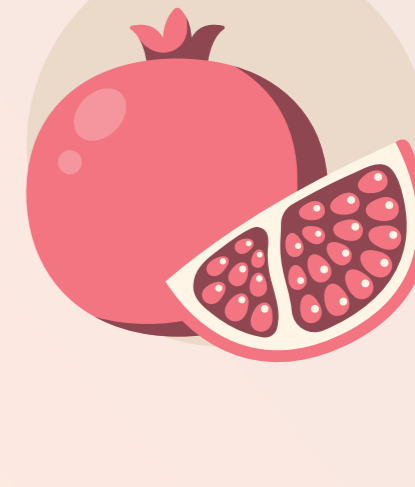


• The big news of the week is that **you may start to feel your baby move**. Plus...

- Your **baby's eyes can move**, although they'll stay shut for now
- they can react to **loud noises**
- their mouth can **open and close**
- fingernails are **starting to grow**
- Your baby will have their own unique **fingerprints**. Even identical twins have different fingerprints.

How big is your baby when you are 17 weeks pregnant?

Your baby is about **the size of a pomegranate** and the weight of **a ball of mozzarella**.¹



Your Body²

• You may notice that **your breasts have changed considerably** since your pregnancy began.



• Hormones are **preparing your breasts for milk production** — more blood is flowing to the breasts, and the glands **that produce milk are growing** in preparation for breastfeeding.

• This can increase your **breast size** (many women increase **one to two cup sizes**) and make **veins become visible**.

• Buy **supportive bras in a few different sizes** to manage your breast growth during pregnancy.

Week 18

The 18th Week of Pregnancy

You are almost to the half-way point!

What is happening with your baby when you are 18 weeks pregnant^{3,4}?



• **Your baby's reflexes are developing** this week — and on the agenda will be **hearing, feeling, swallowing and sucking**

• They will also be doing a lot of **wriggling around and moving their little arms and legs**

How big is your baby when you are 18 weeks pregnant?

Your baby is approximately **the size and weight of a sweet red pepper**.³



Your Body³



• You might be starting to feel **a bit clumsier as your belly gets bigger**. Your breasts may have gone up a size, too, particularly if it's your first pregnancy.

• **Your blood pressure is probably a bit lower than it was**, so don't leap up from the sofa, or it could make **you feel dizzy**.



• **Your baby has been moving around** for the past couple of months, but you wouldn't have noticed because they were so small. Now, you might start to **feel some movement** — it's like a bubbling or fluttering inside your belly.

• You may also notice a line down your stomach, called **'black line'**. This is normal skin pigmentation and **nothing to worry about**. **It will probably vanish a few months after your baby's born**.

Tips for making your pregnancy better

• Coping with headaches in pregnancy

○ Enjoy a soothing head massage.

You don't need special oils - just ask your partner or a family member to **gently massage your scalp and neck** while you sit upright on a chair. Research shows that regular head massages can **reduce headaches** by easing stress and relaxing the muscles that go into spasm.¹



○ You can also **make changes to your lifestyle** to try and help prevent and treat headaches. Try to:⁵

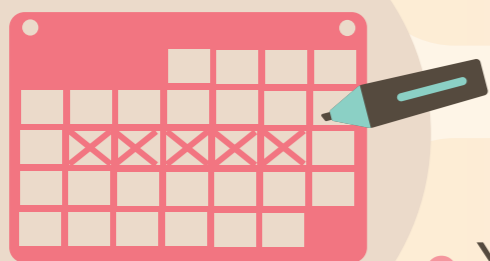
○ drink **plenty of fluids** to prevent dehydration

○ get **enough sleep**

○ rest and relax – you could try a **pregnancy yoga class**, for example



• This is a good week for **planning and getting things done**. Make a 'to do' list and start ticking things off – **it's amazingly therapeutic**. Put 'me time' on the list, in case you forget that you're important too.³



• You're probably **busting out of your usual clothes** – so get yourself something **'new' that will make you look and feel good**.³

References:

1. NHS. Start 4 life. Week-by-week guide to pregnancy. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/pregnancy/week-by-week/2nd-trimester/week-17/#anchor-tabs>. Last accessed at: 24/10/2021
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