



Helping you to give your baby a healthy start

Week 20

Measuring roughly 22cm, your baby is now becoming more aware as the part of their brain which controls their senses develops. The heart is beating strongly and can easily be detected. The skin is protecting itself by secreting a thick white mucus called vernix which acts as a waterproof barrier whilst in the womb.

You're now due to have your 20-week scan called the 'anomaly scan'. Its purpose is to check that everything is as it should be and your baby is developing normally. It may also be the first time you get a real glimpse of your growing baby, and many mums take their partner or a friend along to share the excitement.

The scan takes about 15-20 minutes. During the scan, the sonographer will look for any abnormalities in your baby's physical growth and development, and also check the position of the placenta. At some point, they may let you see your baby on the screen and point out details like your baby's heartbeat and their growing limbs. They may also be able to tell you the sex of your baby – not all hospitals will do this, and you will usually have to ask them to tell you if you'd like to know.

If your sonographer detects any kind of problem, you will be told at once and you may be invited back for another scan. Another scan does not always mean that there is a serious problem with your baby.

If your hospital provides such a service, you may be able to buy a print of your scan picture to share with your loved ones. If any aspect of your scan is worrying you, or you have a question you didn't get to ask at the time, our expert team of midwives and healthcare professionals may be able to provide the answers – call them on 08457 623 628 or try our confidential instant messaging service, Live Chat

Many mums experience leg cramps during their second and third trimesters. The extra weight you're carrying around is bound to put extra pressure on your leg muscles. However, cramps can also occur if you're lacking in calcium or salt in your blood, if you're dehydrated, if you're simply inactive for long periods of time or if your growing bump is putting pressure on your nerves. Speak to your doctor or midwife if you have any concerns.