

Pregnancy - antenatal checks of your baby

These diagrams show the position of the baby and demonstrate the technique of 'abdominal palpation' - which means to examine by touching and feeling. The midwife or doctor uses this technique during your antenatal visit to examine your baby's development.

Baby in vertex - or 'head' down position.



1. Assessing the height of the fundus (lower area of the baby) - seeing how many fingerbreadths below the xiphisternum (bottom of the woman's sternum bone) the baby is laying.



2. Assessing the size of baby and feeling for the baby's back and limbs.



3. Pawlik's grip - the lower part of the uterus is grasped by the midwife to determine the presenting part.



4. Pelvic palpation to determine the position of the baby's head.



5. Measuring the height of the fundus which generally corresponds to the number of weeks of gestation



6. Listening to the baby's heartbeat.

Baby in breech position - or 'bottom' down position.



1. Checking the height of the fundus (the highest point of the uterus). At 20 weeks this measurement is taken from the belly button. When the pregnancy is at term (37-40 weeks), it's taken from the lower end of the woman's sternum bone (the xiphisternum).



2. Assessing the baby's position and size. Feeling for the baby's head, back and limbs.



3. Using 'Pawlik's grip' to check that the baby's buttocks are in the pelvis.



4. Listening to the baby's heartbeat.

For more information

- Contact the midwives at the Family Birth Centre at the Mercy Hospital for Women - Tel. (03) 9270 2222.

This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:

Mercy Hospital for Women

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