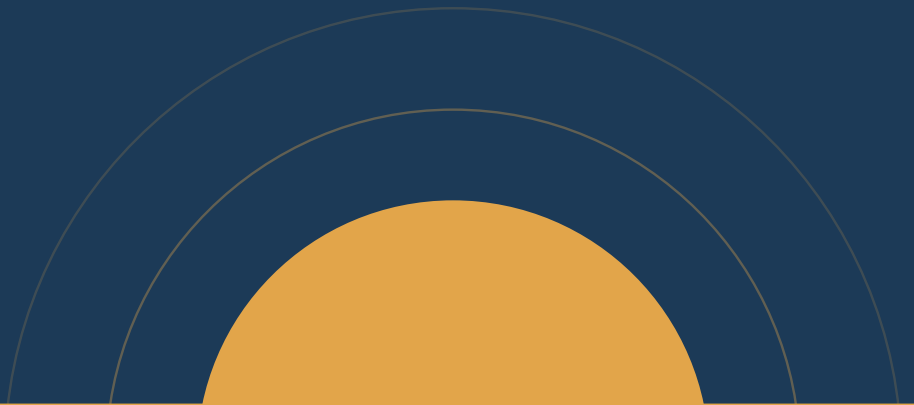


Mamavela

The 40-Week Pregnancy Companion

Every week of pregnancy explained: how your baby grows, what your body does, what to ask at each visit.



Free sample

For the personal use of the buyer and their family; sharing or reselling is not allowed. This book informs and does not replace medical advice. Questions: administration@lacangel.fr

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Your week-by-week guide from the first positive test to the day you meet your baby — for the US and the UK.

1. Welcome: how to use this companion

You have probably already noticed that pregnancy comes with a great deal of information and very little order. A friend says one thing, a forum says another, an app sends you a cheerful notification about fruit. This companion is designed to do the opposite: to give you one calm, well-sourced place to come back to every week, and to leave the rest of the noise outside.

Everything in these pages comes from public health bodies and professional colleges that you can check yourself: the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the NHS in England, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), the World Health Organization (WHO), Cleveland Clinic and peer-reviewed studies. Every source is listed in the bibliography at the end, with its full web address and the date it was consulted. Where the US and the UK do things differently — and they often do — we tell you both, side by side.

An important promise.

This book informs; it does not replace your midwife, your obstetrician, your family doctor or your hospital. It contains no diagnosis and no medicine doses. If something feels wrong, you never need a book's permission to call for help. Chapter 9 tells you exactly when to call, and who.

Written for every kind of family

Whether this is your first baby or your fourth, whether you are doing this with a husband, a wife, a co-parent or on your own, whether your baby was conceived after months of trying, with IVF or with a donor, or took you completely by surprise — this book is for you. We say "your partner" for convenience; read it as "whoever you lean on". Chapter 8 is written for them, and chapter 11 gathers what the guidelines say for twins, pregnancy at 35 and over, IVF and pregnancy after a loss.

There is also no "right" way to feel, to give birth or to feed a baby. An epidural, a caesarean, formula, going back to work early: none of these is a failure, and you will never find a sentence in these pages that says otherwise.

How each week is built

Every week from 4 to 40 follows the same rhythm, so you always know where to look:

- **Your baby this week** — size and development, from the NHS week-by-week guide, ACOG and Cleveland Clinic.
- **What you may feel** — the common, normal changes, and the ones worth mentioning to your

midwife or doctor.

- **Is this normal? / When to call** — a short box on the questions people most often ask that week.
- **This week's to-do** — a short checklist you can tick.
- **Care this week (US / UK)** — appointments, screenings and vaccines that usually fall around this point.
- **My notes** — a space for your thoughts, questions for your next appointment, or simply how you felt.

About sizes and comparisons

Babies grow at their own pace, and the lengths in this book are averages, not targets. Until about week 20, babies are usually measured from the top of the head to the bottom (crown–rump length), because the legs are curled up and hard to see. From around week 20 the NHS measures from head to heel. That is why the length seems to jump suddenly between weeks 19 and 20: the baby has not doubled overnight, the ruler has simply changed. Lengths are given in centimetres with an approximate conversion to inches.

About the words we use

We say "midwife or doctor" throughout, because in the UK most pregnancy care is led by midwives, while in the US many people see an obstetrician–gynecologist (ob-gyn), a family physician or a certified nurse-midwife. Use whichever is yours. We also say "maternity unit" for the hospital department or birth centre you have been told to call.

2. How your pregnancy is dated

Week 1 starts before you are pregnant

The first surprise for many people is that pregnancy is counted from the first day of your last menstrual period (LMP), not from the day of conception. ACOG explains that a normal pregnancy lasts about 40 weeks from the first day of the LMP, and that pregnancy is assumed to start 2 weeks after that day. So an extra 2 weeks are counted at the beginning, when you are not actually pregnant yet. When this book talks about "week 4", it means 4 weeks since the first day of your last period — roughly 2 weeks after conception.

Cleveland Clinic describes the same convention: the first two weeks are a "getting ready" period, ovulation happens at the end of the second week, and fertilisation in the third.

The 280-day rule

By convention, ACOG states that the estimated due date (EDD) is 280 days after the first day of the LMP. This is the method that paper "pregnancy wheels" and online calculators use, and it is often called Naegele's rule. In practice it can be done in three steps:

1. Take the first day of your last period.
2. Add 7 days.
3. Count back 3 months (or forward 9 months), and adjust the year if needed.

Worked example. If your last period started on 10 January, add 7 days (17 January) and count back 3 months: your estimated due date is 17 October. Count 280 days on a calendar and you arrive at the same place.

The NHS due date calculator lets you adjust for your cycle length, because the rule assumes a 28-day cycle with ovulation on day 14. ACOG points out the limits of this assumption: it does not account for inaccurate recall of the LMP, irregular cycles or variation in the timing of ovulation, and it reports that only about half of women accurately recall their LMP.

Why your scan may change your date

ACOG's committee opinion on estimating the due date (reaffirmed in 2025) says that an ultrasound measurement in the first trimester, up to and including 13 weeks and 6 days, is the most accurate method to establish or confirm how far along you are. Measuring the crown–rump length at that stage has an accuracy of plus or minus 5 to 7 days.

That is why your provider may move your due date after the first scan. ACOG's rules of thumb are:

When the dating scan is done	Accuracy of the scan	When ACOG advises changing the due date
Before 9 weeks	plus or minus 5–7 days	Difference of more than 5 days from LMP dating
9 weeks to 13 weeks 6 days	plus or minus 5–7 days	Difference of more than 7 days
14 weeks to 15 weeks 6 days	plus or minus 7–10 days	Difference of more than 7 days
16 weeks to 21 weeks 6 days	plus or minus 7–10 days	Difference of more than 10 days
22 weeks to 27 weeks 6 days	plus or minus 10–14 days	Difference of more than 14 days
28 weeks and beyond	plus or minus 21–30 days	Difference of more than 21 days, with great caution

ACOG also says that once your due date has been set, later changes should be rare. If you conceived through IVF, your due date is set from the age of the embryo and the date of transfer.

In the UK, the NHS offers a scan at 11 to 14 weeks that checks when your baby is due, checks development and shows whether you are expecting more than one baby. This is often called the dating scan or the 12-week scan.

Your due date is a window, not an appointment

Only about 1 in 20 women give birth on their due date — ACOG and the NHS both give this figure. The NHS due date calculator notes that pregnancy normally lasts from 37 to 42 weeks from the first day of your last period.

A well-known study by Jukic and colleagues followed 125 naturally conceived pregnancies in which the day of ovulation was known precisely from hormone measurements. The median time from ovulation to birth was 268 days (38 weeks and 2 days), and even after excluding preterm births, the natural length of pregnancy varied over a range of 37 days. In other words: perfectly healthy pregnancies simply differ in length. (Human Reproduction, 2013; DOI: 10.1093/humrep/det297.)

What "term" means

ACOG and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine use precise labels for the end of pregnancy (Committee Opinion 579, reaffirmed in 2025):

Label	Weeks of pregnancy
Early term	37 weeks 0 days to 38 weeks 6 days
Full term	39 weeks 0 days to 40 weeks 6 days
Late term	41 weeks 0 days to 41 weeks 6 days
Post-term	42 weeks 0 days and beyond

You will also see weeks written as "36 3/7": that means 36 weeks and 3 days.

Trimesters: the US and UK count them differently

This matters when you read American and British material side by side.

	US (ACOG)	UK (NHS week-by-week guide)
First trimester	First day of LMP to 13 weeks 6 days	Up to week 12
Second trimester	14 weeks 0 days to 27 weeks 6 days	Weeks 13 to 27
Third trimester	28 weeks 0 days to 40 weeks 6 days	From week 28

This book follows the ACOG definition for its chapter breaks (weeks 4–13, 14–27, 28–40), and tells you when the NHS considers you to be in a new trimester.

Embryo or fetus?

ACOG uses "embryo" for the first 8 weeks after fertilisation and "fetus" from 9 weeks after fertilisation until birth. The NHS week-by-week guide says your embryo becomes a fetus around week 8 of pregnancy. British spelling is "foetus"; the meaning is the same.

My dates

First day of my last period

_____ Due date from my period (280 days): _____ Date of my

dating scan: _____ Due date after the scan: _____ 37 weeks (early

term) falls on: _____ 39 weeks (full term) falls on: _____ 42 weeks

falls on: _____

End of the sample

Thank you for reading this far. We hope these first pages already feel useful, and that you can see how the rest of the book is built: clear steps, pages to fill in, sources you can check.

The full book has 56 pages.

Get it here: <https://mamavela.com/shop/the-40-week-pregnancy-companion/>

One-time payment, instant PDF.