

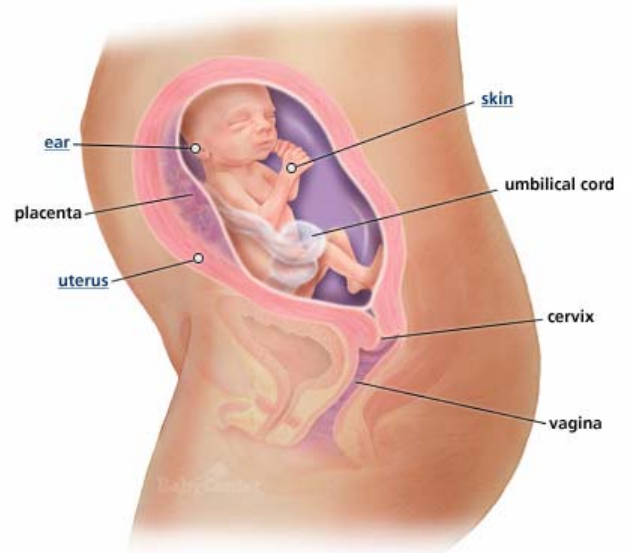
## Our TTC Journey

### Week 23 – April 18<sup>th</sup> – April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008



I have started to notice some mild swelling this week in my ankles and feet. It's called edema, and it happens because changes in my blood chemistry cause fluid to shift into my tissue and because my enlarging uterus puts pressure on the veins returning blood from the lower half of my body, slowing circulation in my legs. Edema is often worse at the end of the day and in the summer. My body will eliminate the extra fluid after I've the baby (which is why I may urinate often and sweat a lot for a few days after delivery).

Your baby is more than 11 inches long and weighs just over a pound (about as much as a large mango). His skin is red and wrinkled. Blood vessels in his lungs are developing to prepare him for breathing. He can swallow, but he normally won't pass his first stool (called meconium) until after birth. Loud noises heard often in utero — such as your dog barking or the roar of a vacuum cleaner — probably won't faze your baby when he hears them outside the womb.



April 18<sup>th</sup> – I am just starting my 6<sup>th</sup> month of this pregnancy and I'm so ecstatic !! I am feeling good so far, I get hungry easily, and always want water around me! But if I could, I would drink huge glasses of milk! I love milk now! I didn't before ☺

April 19<sup>th</sup> – Today we went shopping for cars and the baby was moving all the time. There were several strong kicks in the evening as well. Its awesome to know that the baby's doing well !!!



Beanlette's Corner

April 20<sup>th</sup> – The baby kicked for a good hour today, and I laid down on the bed and had DH put his hand on my stomach and he felt the kicks too. It was very exciting! I had a hypoglycemic episode, so I don't believe an increase in my medication is warranted at this point. I guess I just have to watch what I eat and walk a little after meals.

April 21<sup>st</sup> – Normally during my working day I drink 2 32-oz glasses of water. Yes I'm that parched, mostly from talking customers through their dilemmas. I didn't use the potty before leaving work. I felt that I could go, but I wasn't dancing yet, and was eager to leave work, so DH picked me up and away for home we went.

About 30 minutes into our journey I notice that the baby is climbing all over my innards, so I

crouched down a bit and let him have his way with my abdomen. He wasn't getting situated fast enough, so I pushed on my left side to get him to move to another spot more comfy for me. Then about 10 minutes later I get sharp, 1 second in duration cramps. They came 1-2 a minute for about 5 minutes. I started to get a little freaked out and just thought that my bladder was full and was causing my cervix to feel pain (not intense pain, just a period like ache from my cervix). Then after the cramp, I'd have a throbbing feeling, a lingering reminder of the pain from the cramp just a minute before.

So we get home and I run to the potty and go, and it felt great! There was no blood, but I still had that feeling of cramp in the region. So I laid down and rested for 10 minutes. I called my Peri doctor and told her what my symptoms were. She said that she doesn't think I went into pre term labor, but wanted me to watch out for contractions, stay rested and hydrated. While laying there, DH thought that it would be better for all involved if they checked my cervix to make sure it wasn't thinning, as I was still getting dull aches.

So off to the local hospital we go. I was admitted and hooked up to a fetal monitor. They had one gizmo over my belly button to measure contractions and another device to measure the baby's heartbeat, which was around 140-150. I was there maybe 5 minutes before I felt I had to stretch to clear my child's jumping jack, but it was strong, as if he was coming out of my skin. The nurse said to relax, as I was having a contraction!!!!!!!

WHAT??????????

It went away in 45 seconds, it didn't hurt, and I continued answering her questions. About 2 minutes later ..... here comes another! At first it feels like the baby rolling, but all of a sudden it gets much stronger than anything he's ever done to me, and it feels as if my abdomen is going to open up! Then 30-45 seconds after it starts, it's done! She asked me how much pain these were causing me, and I said 1. It wasn't pain. It was just uncomfortable.

So they had me drink lots of water and I ate my "dinner" ... ritz crackers (to keep my blood sugar from dropping) ... and DH was so good to me. The contractions caused me to freak out and the adrenaline rush made me shiver.

So he threw jackets and blankets on me and kept pressure on the baby's heartbeat monitor.

A couple hours later the doc came in and told me that contractions do not equal labor. It is contractions plus a thinning cervix which equals labor. So he did a cervical exam, and said that it is closed and firm and long and in no way going into labor signs. It's not thinning out or softening. WHEW! But while he was there, he did a q-tip swab of my cervical area and sent it off to the lab.

They did a FFN, which stands for Fetal fibronectin.

From Wikipedia:

Fetal fibronectin (fFN) is a protein produced by fetal cells and a type of fibronectin. fFN is found at the interface of the chorion and the decidua (between the fetal sack and the uterine lining). It can be thought of as an adhesive or "biological glue" that binds the fetal sack to the uterine lining.

Fetal fibronectin "leaks" into the vagina if a preterm delivery is likely to occur and can be measured in a diagnostic test.

It is an excellent biological marker of premature (preterm) delivery; a delivery before 37 weeks of gestation.

When the fFN test is considered positive, delivery is likely to occur soon. When the fFN test is negative, it means that there is little if any danger of preterm labor for 7-10 days. The test is easily performed. A specimen is collected from the patient using a vaginal swab. The swab is placed in a transport tube and sent to the lab for testing. The lab can easily produce a test result in less than one hour.

A systematic review of the medical literature found that fetal fibronectin is a good predictor of spontaneous preterm birth before cervical dilation. The test may be run on patients between 22 and 35 weeks gestation.

A negative fetal fibronectin test gives a more than 95% likelihood of remaining undelivered for the next 2 weeks. On the other hand, a positive fetal fibronectin test only means a higher risk of preterm delivery (61% of delivery before 34 weeks)[3]. So, the fetal fibronectin test can't tell you for sure that you are in labor, but it can tell you that you're not.

They wanted to monitor me for the next two hours, for a total monitoring time of 3 hours. In that time, DH and I chatted and I kept warm under the many blankets they gave me.

Surprisingly they came in to tell me that my FFN came back before the 3 hour time window!!!!!!!!!!!! AND ITS NEGATIVE !!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Oh I was so relieved.

And then they read out the little seismograph sheet and said that in 3 hours I've had 10 contractions. And if you put this little monitor doohickey on all pregnant women for all 40 weeks, you'll see that 99% of them have contractions at some point, and they're usually nothing. Especially if there is no pain.

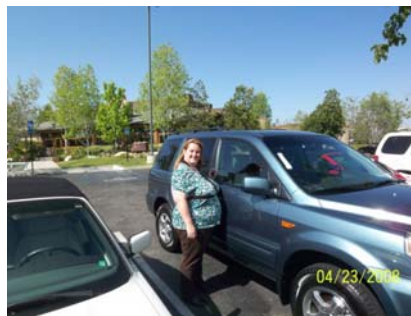
However, I did learn that a full bladder can irritate the uterus muscle, and cause it to contract. So lesson learned here .... ALWAYS USE THE POTTY ON THE HOUR !! Oh and not only that, any UTI, or bacterial infection can also cause uterine contractions. So if I have 6 an hour, I'm to call my Peri doc. Oh and any dehydration can cause contractions too. So you have to stay hydrated and pee every hour!

But for now, me and the baby are fine, just a little freaked ... but now I know what a contraction feels like!

April 22<sup>nd</sup> – So far today there have been no contractions. There has been plenty of movement and I'm feeling good, but so far .. nope, nothing! Whew! I've also been hydrated today and hopefully I can sleep well tonight. Sunday and last night I didn't sleep as well as I should have.

April 23<sup>rd</sup> – I finally got a good night's sleep! Good thing too. We got our new baby mobile! And here it is !!! And me with my big ole pregnant belly!

The car is a 2008 Honda Pilot. It's a great car! We love it!



April 24<sup>th</sup> – Well its official, Beanlette is definitely our child, and is still definitely a boy !!! LOL

The child is stubborn. He doesn't really usually move much in the mornings, its mostly in the afternoons when he gets going. So therefore ..... he didn't cooperate with the u/s tech today, and we didn't get to do the echo scan. But he's happy, and weighs 1lb 8oz, and measures perfectly and looks lovely and everything else just went great! But no matter how she tried to move him, he didn't get into the right position. Basically my belly was also too big, and this prevented her from seeing the heart as well as she had hoped to.

LOL sooooo, we go back in a month to do another echo cardio scan to check for defects. I think he's fine, and as you can see, I'm totally losing sleep over it !!!

I've gained 1 lb in the last month, blood pressure and sugars all looked normal. So she says she feels confident that I'll be ok for a month. She says she believes the contractions were just an irritated uterus situation. I agree !! Tomorrow is my off Friday. I'm soo ready for an off day!