

My 1-4 Week Pregnancy

Total Women's Health of Baltimore



Development

Every month your uterus prepares itself for pregnancy by creating a thick, lush and vascular bed of endometrial tissue in preparation for implantation of a fertilized egg. When this does not happen, this lining is shed resulting in a "period." Prior to pregnancy and about 2 weeks after your last period, an egg is released from the ovary and enters the fallopian tube. Sperm are very competitive! If you are sexually active or have been inseminated, millions of sperm travel via semen into the vagina, through the cervix and uterus and enter the fallopian tube to penetrate this egg. For singleton pregnancies, just one sperm out of the millions that have made the journey is successful in penetrating the egg. This process is called "fertilization". The fertilized egg then travels, taking 3-4 days before it makes it to the uterus where it implants and embeds into the thick, plush and vascular bed created in preparation for its arrival. This fertilized egg is now known as a "blastocyst". The blastocyst, a teeny ball of cells, is busy settling into its new home, prepping for all the crucial changes that will happen over the next 6 weeks. It continues to make a network of new blood vessel connections with the uterine lining.

In reality, the sperm and egg don't meet until about 2 weeks after the start of your period but pregnancy weeks are calculated by the number of weeks from your last menstrual period.

One week following implantation, the hormone of pregnancy called "human chorionic gonadotropin" (hCG) starts to be produced by cells forming the placenta. The rudimentary cells of the placenta are called syncytiotrophoblasts at this stage. The most sensitive pregnancy tests can detect hCG levels at as low as 20 mIU. This level of hCG is present in your urine at about 7-10 days post ovulation. These levels start to rise even before you are late with your next period! Blood tests can pick up on the hCG hormone levels even earlier, at about 6-8 days post ovulation or 8-10 days before a missed period.

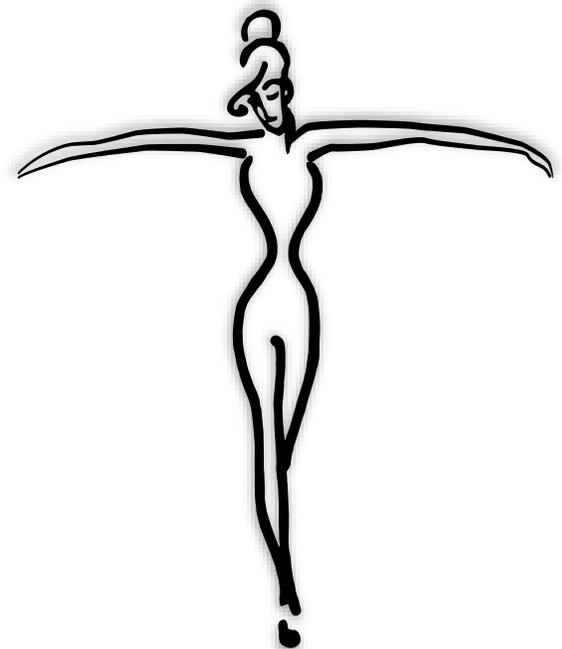
At 4 weeks pregnant, baby is smaller than a poppy seed. So, can we see anything by ultrasound at this very early stage of pregnancy? An early ultrasound may show only thickening of the lining of the uterus, called a "decidual reaction." A small fluid filled gestational sac can then be seen on ultrasound between 4-5 weeks. And at about 5 weeks, the yolk sac, a rounded circle within the gestational sac, will also be seen. The yolk sac functions as a source of nourishment for the developing fetus until the placenta takes over. It is not until about 5 1/2 to 6 weeks that an actual fetus can first be visualized on ultrasound. A viable pregnancy is not confirmed until a heartbeat is seen at about 6 weeks.

My Body & Symptoms

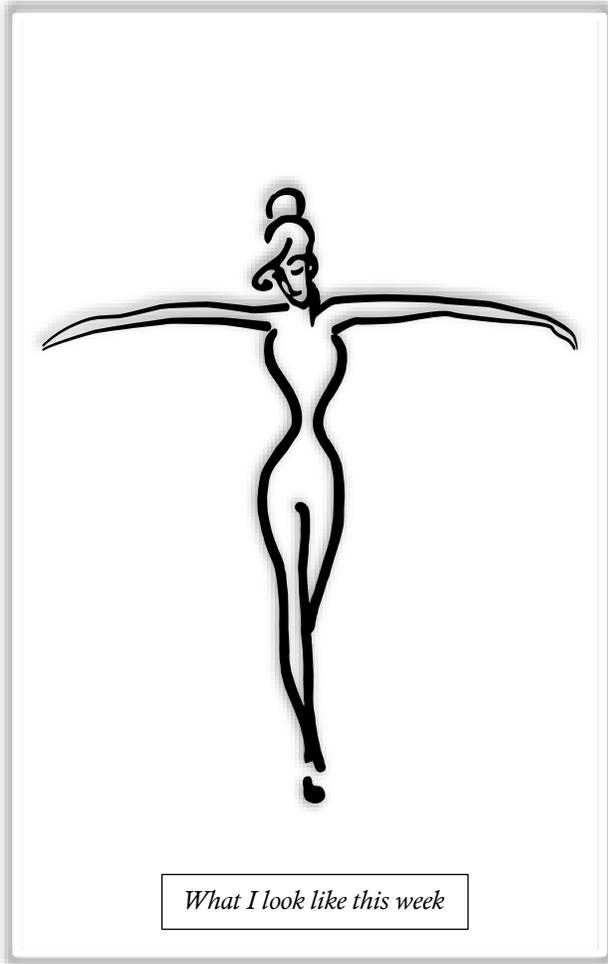
Congratulations! If you know you're 4 weeks pregnant, you found out the news earlier than most. You may be totally excited or you may be bummed! Either way, physically, you may not be feeling any different (for now at least). If you are experiencing symptoms, this may present as nipple and breast tenderness, fatigue, bloating, mild cramping, spotting and morning sickness.

Things To Consider

Definitely celebrate this amazing news with your partner, but you may not want to tell the whole world...just yet. Your first call at week 4 of pregnancy should be to Dr. Oliver to schedule your first prenatal visit, where she will confirm your pregnancy with a urine or blood test. Start taking a prenatal vitamin and eating healthy. Light bleeding can occur at 4 weeks as a result of implantation.



Add your 1-4 week picture



My To-Do List

- Begin taking prenatal vitamins
- Quit smoking (if applicable)
- Quit drinking (if applicable)
- Cut down on caffeine
- Start eating well
- Make an appointment with Dr. Oliver

Date of Visit:

Weight:

Memories & Milestones

My thoughts on becoming a pregnant:

I suspected I might be pregnant because:

How does my partner feel about the pregnancy?

I found out I was pregnant on: