

Third trimester

Weeks 29 to 40

Well done! You're on the home stretch.

You've reached the **third trimester** of pregnancy. This is the last chapter before you meet your baby, and while the weeks ahead may bring new challenges, they also bring excitement, anticipation and many special moments as you prepare for birth.

My body is working overtime!

As your baby continues to grow, your body is adjusting to support them right until delivery. Your tummy may feel heavier and sit lower, and your belly button may even protrude slightly. This is all completely normal. Some women experience backache, leg cramps, or discomfort in their hands and feet.

You may feel warmer than usual and notice increased perspiration. Shortness of breath can also occur as your growing uterus presses upwards – propping yourself up with pillows when resting or sleeping may help. As your baby begins to move down into the pelvis closer to birth, breathing often becomes easier again.

Sleep can become more challenging during this stage. Lying on your left side with a pillow between your knees or under your tummy can help ease pressure on your back and improve comfort. Some women experience false contractions, called **Braxton Hicks contractions** around weeks 32 to 34. If you feel contractions, consult your midwife or doctor.

A total pregnancy weight gain of around **10 to 12.5 kg** is considered healthy for most women. Remember, every pregnancy is unique, so trust your healthcare provider's guidance.

What's happening with your baby?

During the third trimester, your baby's organs continue to mature and strengthen in preparation for life outside the womb. You may notice strong, energetic movements earlier in this trimester. As your baby grows and space becomes more limited, movements may feel different, and more like stretches or rolls than big kicks, however, they should still be felt regularly. By the time your baby is born, a healthy birth weight is usually between **2.6 kg and 3.8 kg**.



Your third trimester to-do list

As you prepare for delivery and life with your newborn, here are a few important steps to keep in mind:

- Continue taking your prescribed **multivitamins and minerals**.
- Enjoy a **balanced diet**. You are *eating for two*, but this doesn't mean double portions. Focus on nutritious, wholesome foods.
- Book an **antenatal class** for you and your partner and check whether this is covered by your Scheme benefits.
- Talk to your doctor or midwife about what to expect during labour and your **delivery options**.
- At around **34 weeks**, contact **Imperial Motus Med** to confirm your maternity benefits and obtain pre-authorisation for your hospital admission.
- Remember to **'book your bed'** with the hospital where you plan to deliver.
- Keep important **emergency contact numbers close by**, such as your doctor/midwife and the labour ward/hospital. Save them on your phone, your partner's phone, and stick them on the fridge too.

By registering for the Belly Babies online programme on www.bellybabies.co.za, you will have access to expert antenatal and postnatal support in the comfort of your own home through:

- an online antenatal course consisting of a comprehensive collection of videos, presented by various experts within the maternity field;
- an online face-to-face consultation with a highly qualified lactation (breastfeeding) specialist, to help you and your baby establish and maintain a happy breastfeeding routine. You can book your personal consultation through the Belly Babies online platform; and
- a follow-up online face-to-face consultation with a lactation specialist, if needed.

Belly Babies' services are paid for by the Scheme. However, you must be enrolled on the Maternity Programme to access this benefit.

Hello Doctor is always available, anytime and anywhere

Hello Doctor is an application that offers you access to expert telephonic medical advice from qualified South African medical doctors through your phone, tablet or computer, at absolutely no cost to you!

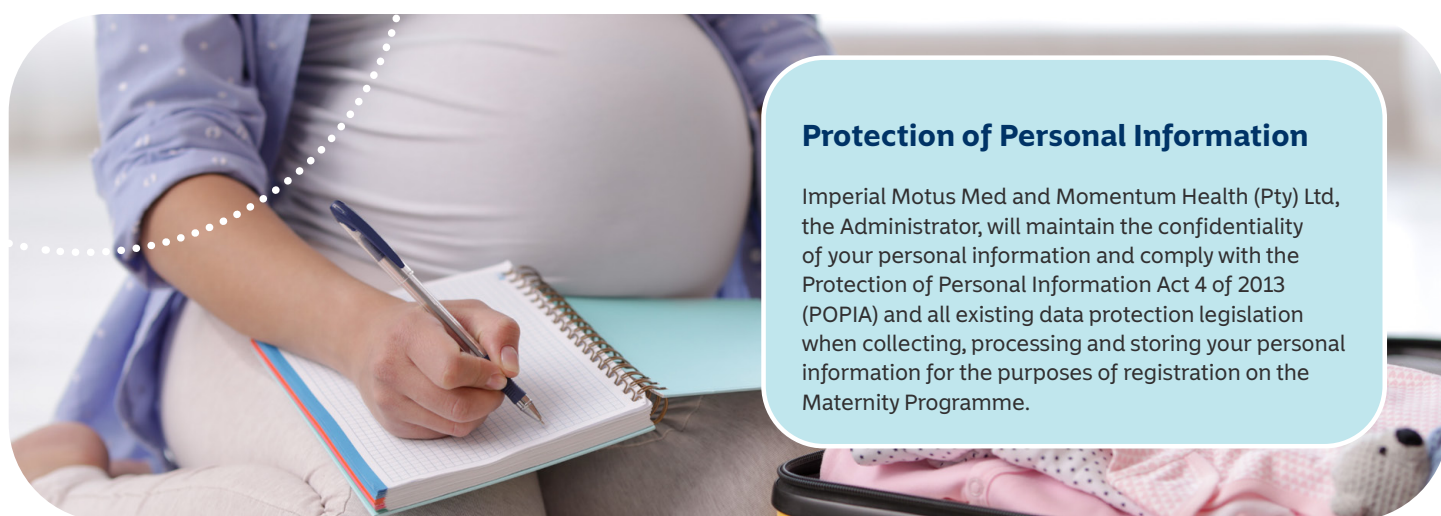
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Remember to register your baby as a dependant on the Scheme within 30 days of birth. This ensures that any medical care your baby may need is covered from the very beginning.

As you move through these final weeks, be kind to yourself, rest when you can, and enjoy this special time of anticipation. You're almost there, and very soon you'll be welcoming your little one into the world.



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