

Fetal Growth Restriction

When a baby's weight is smaller than expected for the weeks of pregnancy.

This is called fetal growth restriction (FGR). This happens in about 10% of pregnancies.

What is Fetal Growth Restriction?

- When your baby is smaller than they should be for how many weeks of pregnancy.
- Fetal growth restriction is when the baby's weight is less than 10th percentile of the usual weight at that gestational age. That means that out of 10 babies, your baby weighs less than 9 of them at the same weeks of pregnancy.
- A baby can also have fetal growth restriction if the size of the baby's abdomen is too small, even if their total weight is normal.
- During your prenatal visit if your belly measures smaller than expected an ultrasound may be recommended to check the baby's weight.
- It is hard to tell the difference between a small but healthy baby and a baby that is not growing normally and has more risks. Some babies who are small when measured by an ultrasound may be normal size when they are born.
- Some babies will show other signs that they have fetal growth restriction like less water around the baby (amniotic fluid), abnormal circulation (doppler measurements), or problems with the placenta.
- About 20% of babies (2 out of 10) who seem to have fetal growth restriction on ultrasound are small, but healthy and won't have any complications when they are born.

What causes it?

- Problems with the placenta or umbilical cord are the most common causes.
- Having health problems like diabetes and high blood pressure.
- Using drugs, tobacco, or alcohol in the pregnancy.
- Genetic conditions in the baby.
- Some infections.
- If you had a baby with fetal growth restriction before.

More Information

What can happen?

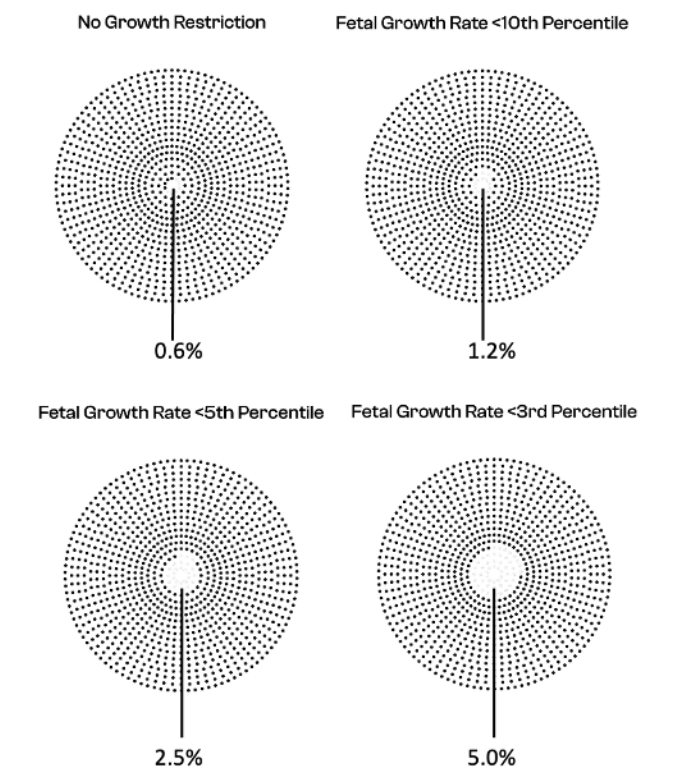
A baby with fetal growth restriction has a higher chance of stillbirth. The risk is worse if the baby's weight is very low or if there are signs the placenta is not working well.

If you have other health problems in your pregnancy like high blood pressure or diabetes the risks may be higher.

There is more chance that a baby may be stressed during labor. There may be a higher chance of a c-sections (cesarean birth). This risk may be higher the longer you are pregnant.

There is more chance that the baby will need to go to the neonatal intensive care unit after they are born. Babies with fetal growth restriction can have problems with low blood sugar, high bilirubin (jaundice), infections, or trouble breathing after birth.

Risk of Stillbirth with Fetal Growth Restriction



Risks out of 1000 pregnancies

What can I do?

You should keep eating a healthy diet, but eating more will not make the baby grow larger.

We recommend visits in the ultrasound unit one or two times a week to check the baby's heart rate, the fluid in the bag of water (amniotic fluid), the baby's heart rate, and the baby's weight.

We may recommend a visit with a high-risk obstetrician (maternal-fetal medicine doctor) and a genetic counselor if the baby is too small or if you have other health problems.

Some babies who are measured small will have a normal weight later in the pregnancy. If this happens you will continue to have normal prenatal care.

If the baby is too small, we recommend starting your labor at the hospital before your due date (induction). Your provider will talk to you more about when the right time is for your baby to be born.

Babies with fetal growth restriction will grow more outside in your arms than inside the belly (uterus).

When should my baby be born?	Week of pregnancy
Baby is smaller than the 10th percentile and bigger than the 3rd percentile	38-39 weeks pregnancy
Baby's abdomen is smaller than the 10th percentile	38-39 weeks pregnancy
Baby is smaller than the 3rd percentile	37 weeks pregnancy
Other concerns seen on ultrasound	Talk to your provider for more information