

<b>Guideline for Diminished Fetal Movements (DFM)</b>		<b>Barnsley Hospital</b>  NHS Foundation Trust	
Author:	Guideline group	Reference number:	
Issue Number		Authorisation date: Reviewed: Next review date:	

## Definition

A reduction in fetal movements or a significant change of fetal activity that is causing the mother concern.

DFM is a significant risk factor for stillbirth. Optimal management should include an evaluation for fetal growth using customized growth charts. Pregnancies affected by DFM represent risk pregnancies – increased risk of fetal growth restriction, preterm births and stillbirths.

## Assess

- Associated risk factors
  - Previous obstetric history (stillbirth, IUGR)
  - Low & high BMI
  - Smokers
  - Maternal Age >35
  - Low socio-economic status
- Recent history of PV loss
- Abdominal pain

Even low risk pregnancies with reduced fetal movement are associated with having a higher risk of fetal distress during labour, restricted intrauterine growth, oligohydramnios, polyhydramnios, low apgar scores, asphyxia, higher frequency of stillbirth and neonatal deaths. It is recommended that low risk pregnancies with decreased fetal movement should be considered higher risk and thus should have increased surveillance.

## Perform

- Abdominal palpation – recording the fundal height
- CTG if  $\geq 26$  weeks noting fetal activity

On the first episode of referral a midwife can discharge the woman home if there are no associated risk factors and the CTG and clinical examination are normal. Advice and support on fetal activity should be offered and the reduced movement leaflet given.

Routine formal fetal movement counting is not always necessary. However the use of fetal movement kick charts can be a simple way of promoting attention to fetal movement.

**Seek Medical Review if there are any concerns re:**

- Previous obstetric history
- Clinically measuring small or suspected reduced/increased liquor volume
- CTG exhibiting abnormality

After two episodes of referral for DFM seek medical review and arrange USS and follow up in ANC.

**If no fetal heart is located arrange urgent medical review and USS immediately – follow bereavement guideline**

Equality Impact Assessment statement

Women's and Children's Services are committed to ensure that both current and potential service users and their families will not be discriminated against on the grounds of religion, gender, race, sexuality, age, disability, ethnic origin, social circumstance or background. The principles of tolerance, understanding and respect for others is central to what we believe and central to all care provided.

**References**

AN Care NICE guidelines

Tveit, JV; Saastad, E; Bordahl, PE; Stary-Pedersen, B; Froen, JF Nov 2006 The epidemiology of reduced fetal movements