

1st trimester



0-12 WEEKS
MARIE is 12 weeks pregnant and dreaming a lot

2nd trimester



12-24 WEEKS
SARA is 17 weeks pregnant and can't wait to bloom!

3rd trimester



24-40 WEEKS
KATE is 32 weeks pregnant and starting to slow down

Pregnancy DIARIES

Three readers at different stages of pregnancy share the ups and downs of this very special time



'We could see the baby's heart beating'

MARIE IKIN, 32, is 12 weeks pregnant with her second child.

We were shocked when I fell pregnant in the first month of trying. The first test was negative, but I still thought I might be pregnant, so I did another a few days later. This time, it was positive. It was lovely after the earlier disappointment and my partner Rich got quite tearful.

My daughter Amber, 7, can't wait to have a little brother or sister. There's such a gap between my pregnancies, it feels as though I'm experiencing everything for the first time! I've just had my 12-week dating scan, which was amazing. The baby was moving all the time, and we could see its little heart beating.

Since the nausea started at around six weeks, I've totally gone off meat and cooked veg. Instead, I'm living on fruit, salad and pitta bread. My moods were all over the place too, but they've settled down now, thankfully. One strange thing is that I'm having vivid dreams. I never remembered my dreams before, but now I can recall them perfectly.

Last year, I tested positive for the bacteria Group B Strep (GBS), which can cause infection in newborn babies if it's passed on

during birth. I'll have a swab later in my pregnancy to see if I'm still affected. If so, I'll need an antibiotic drip during labour to stop the baby getting an infection. I'm not worried though, as my midwife's been very reassuring.

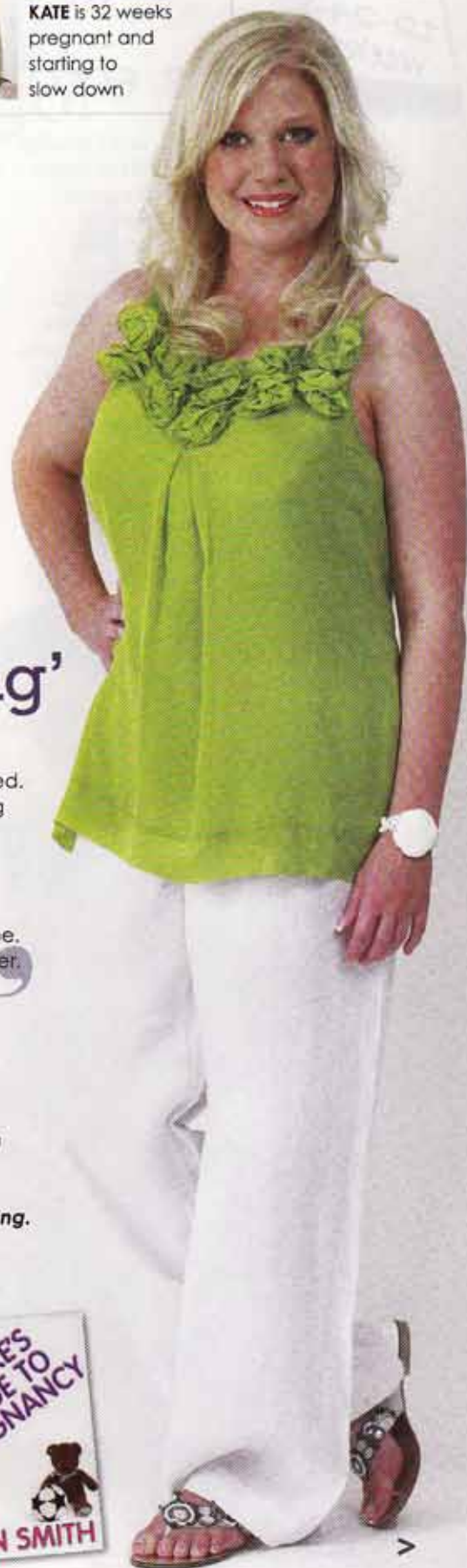
What I wish I'd known:

How different each pregnancy can be. I didn't feel nauseous at all with Amber, so it took me by surprise this time.

Midwife Eleanor Copp from advice service Greatvine (greatvine.com), says:

'GBS bacteria can come and go, so a previous positive test doesn't mean it will still be active. Most babies born to women with GBS are healthy, but in rare cases the baby develops an infection, which can be life-threatening. Giving antibiotics during labour to higher-risk women can prevent most GBS infections in newborns.'

MY PREGNANCY LIFESAVER *'The Bloke's Guide To Pregnancy by Jon Smith (£8.99, Hay House). Rich has loved reading it.'*



Feature Dawn Doherty Photos Marco Vittor at Studio 33 Styling Sally Ann Carroll Hair and Makeup by Lisa Wright at Artistic Licence Marie's outfit: Top Darnell in a Dress trousers and bracelet New Look Scarf by Marie's own



'It's exciting and a little bit scary'

SARA LOTAY, 29, is 17 weeks pregnant with her first baby.

My cat Molly seemed to sense I was pregnant even before I did! She was behaving really oddly around me, licking me and wanting to jump on my lap all the time. My sister's cats were the same when she was expecting. I think they must somehow detect the change in hormones.

My husband Guppy and I had been trying for a few months and were thrilled when the test was positive. At the same time, it was a bit scary because it's such a huge life change. My bump is already a good size. In fact, I was showing from eight weeks and a few people asked if I'm having twins. My midwife says it's because I'm so petite and I'm carrying all out front. I'm a teacher and my pupils have been

quite intrigued, asking all sorts of questions and giving me advice on what to wear! I'm looking forward to taking the baby into school to meet them. I still get waves of nausea occasionally, but the all-day sickness has eased, thankfully. However, I'm still constantly exhausted – even now I can't stay up beyond 9pm and I'm longing for the day when I wake up and feel fantastic. I've had to learn to accept I can only do so much, so when I get home, Guppy does the cooking and cleaning. Without him, the house would be falling down around my ears.

Despite being hungrier than normal, my appetite has been poor. Often I just don't fancy anything or the cooking smells put me off completely. I'm doing my best to eat well, but sometimes I have to force myself. Health-wise everything's fine, though a few weeks ago I started getting pains in my lower abdomen. I was doubled over with pain, but my doctor explained

it was just the ligaments and muscles stretching and as long as I wasn't bleeding, I shouldn't worry. Now, I'm looking forward to my 20-week anomaly scan. We're not planning to find out the sex – that'll be something to look forward to after all the hard work of the birth.

What I wish I'd known:

How much everyone wants to be involved and give you advice. I've found all the attention quite overwhelming.

Midwife Eleanor says:

'This type of pain is common in the middle months. As the baby gets bigger, the ligaments have to stretch and rearrange themselves to support the growing uterus [womb].

There's lots of anecdotal evidence about cats being able to sense their owner's pregnancy. It's well known they'll sit on a woman's bump or if she's in labour at home, they'll follow her around meowing!

It's important to eat regularly even if your appetite is poor. Eat little and often, with carbs for energy, fresh veg and plenty of water. Keep food plain and simple if nausea is a problem.'



MY PREGNANCY LIFESAVER

'Ice cubes. Ice-cold water was the only thing I could cope with when I felt sick.'





'It's like my baby is doing the tango!'

KATE BURTON, 32, is 32 weeks pregnant with her second baby.

Whenever I stand still for longer than five minutes, the baby starts kicking away. It's like she's doing the tango in there! At night, she moves so much, it wakes me up. Seeing my tummy moving around with a life of its own – literally – is bizarre, but reassuring as well. I was barely showing until about a month ago, but in the past few weeks, my tummy's suddenly grown. It's nice to be showing at last because people have started offering me a seat on the bus!

My husband Tom and I were thrilled when we discovered we were having another daughter at the 20-week anomaly scan. It was like being given a little sneak preview – something to keep me going for the rest of the pregnancy. Our 2-year-old, Ella, can't wait – she keeps prodding my tummy and saying, "Baby sister in there."

This trimester I've really noticed a difference in the way I'm feeling. My stomach feels heavy and I'm more tired and lethargic. During the day, I rush around getting everything done so that once Ella's in bed, I can relax.

My midwife has been keeping an eye on my blood pressure because it's been low, which makes me feel dizzy. I've also had Braxton Hicks ['practice'

contractions] from 24 weeks. I haven't been thinking too much about the birth – I'm keeping an open mind. I had a difficult delivery with Ella, so I definitely want to be in hospital where I know I'll be surrounded by expert help if I need it. I'm a tiny bit nervous about how we'll juggle two children, but really excited at the same time.

What I wish I'd known:

Don't bother trying to paint your toenails or shave your legs in the third trimester! Treat yourself to a pedicure and a wax.

Midwife Eleanor says:

'Low blood pressure means you're more likely to feel faint, or even pass out, so it's important to move slowly when getting up from a sitting or lying position. Eat and drink regularly, as your blood pressure drops if you're dehydrated. The good news is that it's temporary and will return to normal after the birth.'

Braxton Hicks occur throughout pregnancy. Some women don't feel them at all, while others notice them as early as 16 weeks, experiencing a sporadic tightening and hardening of the uterus. If contractions become painful, stronger and rhythmic and you have discharge, are sick, or feel the baby move lower, it could be a sign of early labour, so contact your maternity unit straight away.'



MY PREGNANCY LIFESAVER

'My Dreamgenii Pregnancy Support & Feeding Pillow [£44.99, dreamgenii.com]. It supports my bump, back and legs and makes me more comfy in bed, so I sleep better.'

