

*Freestyle Note:*

## 7 WEEKS PREGNANT

**Surprise!** Okay...wow - You've just come into prison & after all the health checks you've now found out that you're pregnant. What a wild roller-coaster ride your feelings & emotions are on right? Firstly, **congratulations**, because **you & your** baby both deserve to be celebrated. Just so you know, I've been in prison & while I wasn't pregnant when I went inside, I was a mum. While you're adjusting to your pregnancy & being inside, you need to focus on looking after yourself. **Rest** when you can, **eat**, even though you might not be hungry & **walk** as much as you can because it'll help you relax. & never ever forget that:

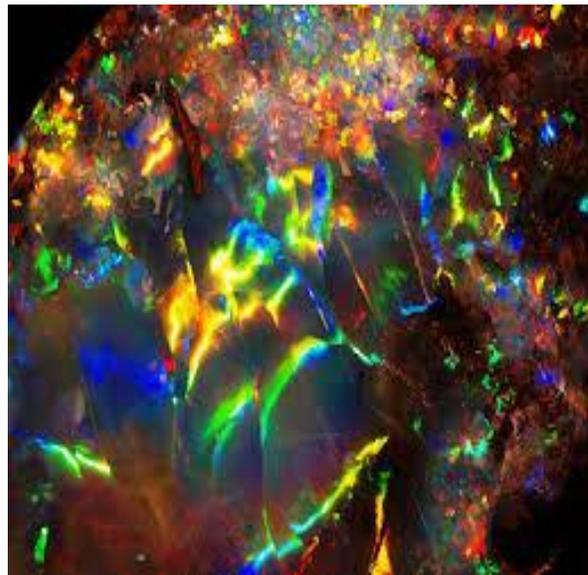
**You are a strong Opal woman & the child you are carrying is precious.**

*From your Opal friend, Darly - Founder of The Opal Place.*

If you've ever seen an uncut or unpolished opal rock, it doesn't look very impressive & is often easily overlooked. But when the time & care is put into polishing & nurturing that rock, the result is always the revelation of the most beautiful & totally unique gem...

**an Opal**

*Darly Royan Paraha*



Every Opal is unique to itself & has such a depth of beauty that this world sorely needs.

You are that precious Opal.

**Beautiful**

**Precious**

**&**

**Unique**

Never doubt yourself or wish that you were someone else.

Instead, take the time to start reclaiming who you truly are.

Prison is going to be just a part of your life-story, but you & this child you carry are eternal.

**Stand Strong.**

*Darly Royan Paraha*

*The Opal Place - Our Place of Inspiration*

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# 7 WEEKS PREGNANT

## How Big Is a Baby at 7 Weeks?

At 7 weeks pregnant, baby is the size of a blueberry. Your embryo measures about .51 inches, having doubled in size since last week. He or she doesn't exactly tip the scales just yet, but is developing like crazy inside your 7-week pregnant belly.

## 7 Weeks Pregnant Is How Many Months?

Seven weeks pregnant means you're one month and about two weeks pregnant.



# 7 WEEKS PREGNANT SYMPTOMS

Being 7 weeks pregnant can cause a whole range of symptoms. Some are no biggie and some can make it difficult to get through your day. These are a few of the most widespread:

- **Nausea.** Morning sickness may be going strong at week 7 of pregnancy. Hang in there, and try to find ways to cope. When your hormones become more normal in the second trimester, the nausea should decrease or even disappear.
- **Food cravings and/or aversions.** You may find yourself with the urge to eat specific or even weird foods or not wanting to go anywhere near certain foods. Food aversions are nature's way of keeping you away from potentially dangerous foods, and typically go hand-in-hand with morning sickness

*Do you have any of these symptoms? If you do write or draw about your experiences & feelings:*

- **Frequent urination.** If it seems like you have the urge to pee constantly, it's not your imagination. Even though you probably don't look pregnant yet, your uterus has already doubled in size, and you also have increased blood flow to your pelvis.
- **Acne.** Breakouts are due to hormonal changes in your body. Before you use any acne fighting products, check with your doctor to make sure they're safe during pregnancy.
- **Extra saliva (spit in your mouth).** Here's a symptom you never expected! The excess saliva is probably also hormonally triggered and could be related to nausea too.
- **Mood swings.** Not only are your hormones out of whack, but you're probably still getting used to the idea of being pregnant, and that can make you become extra emotional.
- **Cramping and/or spotting.** Cramping in early pregnancy is normal. After all, there's a lot happening inside your uterus, and even though it will be several weeks before you feel baby move, you can certainly feel plenty of cramping and pulling at this point in your pregnancy. If any pain in your stomach is severe (stronger than period cramps) or if bleeding becomes heavy like a period, then let the prison staff know.

## 7 WEEKS PREGNANT BELLY

Have you caught yourself holding your 7 weeks pregnant belly safely in your hands? & even pushing it out to fake a baby bump, just to get a preview? Every mum-to-be is different, but many report starting to "show" in the middle of the second trimester when the uterus outgrows the pelvis.

Your 7-week embryo is generating about one hundred new brain cells each minute! And not only is baby's brain becoming more complex, but the heart is too. Also important: Baby's developing a permanent set of kidneys, and arm and leg joints are now forming as well.



## WHY IS MY BABY CALLED AN EMBRYO?

**Question:** Why is my baby called an embryo (em-bree-o)?

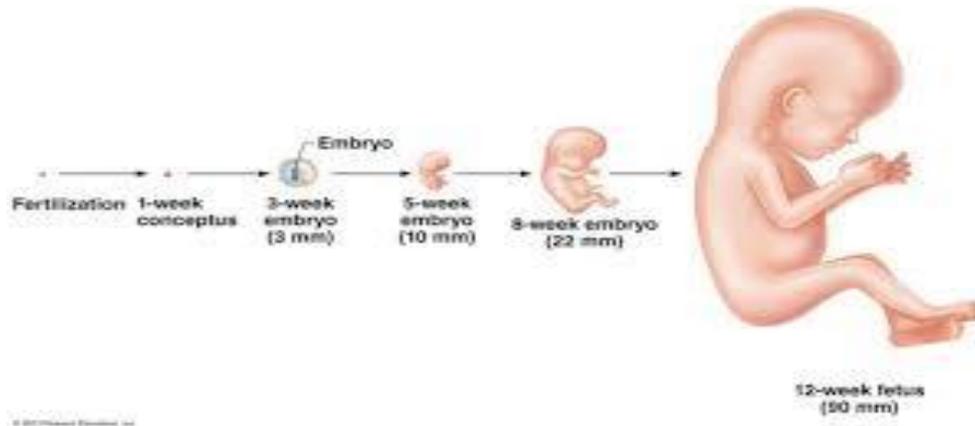
**Answer:** In plants and animals, the zygote will begin to divide by mitosis to produce a multi-cellular organism. The result of this process is an **embryo**.

In human pregnancy, a developing fetus is considered as an **embryo** until the ninth week, fertilization age, or eleventh-week gestational age.

**Question:** What is the difference between an embryo and a fetus?

**Answer:** The distinction between **embryo** and **fetus** is made based on gestational age. An **embryo** is the early stage of human development in which organs are critical body structures are formed.

An **embryo** is termed a **fetus** beginning in the 11th week of pregnancy, which is the 9th week of development after fertilization of the egg.



## The Importance of writing a journal for your child

I never really knew my birth mother as a person. The reason being is that during my childhood my only contact with her was during visits which I found traumatic. My birth mother had mental health issues and that only added to my miss-understanding about her. My beloved foster mother, also caused me no end of sadness by never openly telling me how proud she was that I played hockey for my country. Instead she always chuckled and said something along the lines of "oh what is it you play Darly..soccer, hockey or smockey?"

What I'd like (love) you to consider doing is this. Start a journal now for your child to read when they are older. In this journal capture your hopes and dreams and importantly put into words the struggles you are working on over-coming. Write out your feelings as you carry your unborn baby and then through the years you are incarcerated. In your journal, write, draw, create lyrics, make plans and importantly when your filling in your journal, create each page and entry with love.



Later when I was in my early 40's I finally got hold of my full childhood social welfare records. In amongst this huge pile of documents I found many hand-written letters from my birth mother to the social welfare enquiring about my wellbeing. I was touched by the obvious effort she took in writing these letters during my entire childhood. There were also countless letters written from my foster mother informing the social welfare of my successes with hockey.



Point is, if I had never got to read the letters that had been written so long ago I never would have got to appreciate my birth mother as a parent, or understood that my foster mother was actually really proud of my achievements. The effect of these letters on me was simple - they helped to heal me.

Many of us Opal mums miss out years of our children's lives and sadly some of us never get to spend any time with our children at all. - So tell your story directly from your heart to your child. Say everything you want to say because it's really important that they know you and of your love for them.

**Any woman or man is made stronger  
by the pure love of a mother.**

Have no doubt that you WILL be that loving mother.

*Darly - Founder of The Opal Place*



**I am a Strong Woman**

**Protective & Wise as a Lioness \* Blessed is the Fruit of my Womb**

*My Diary Note:*