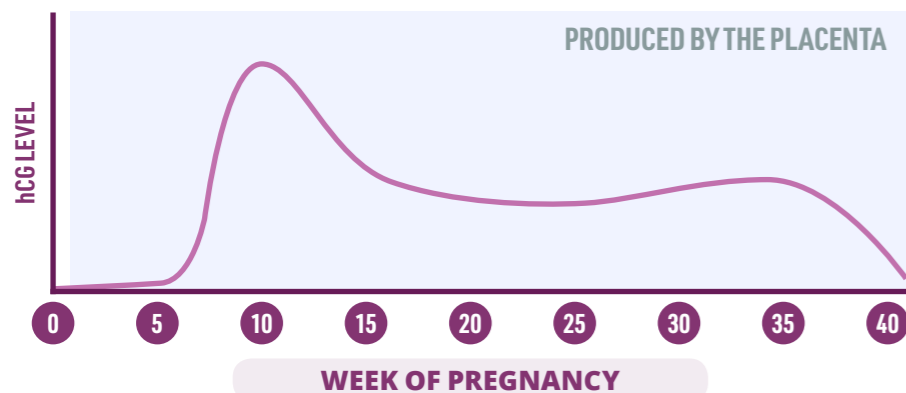


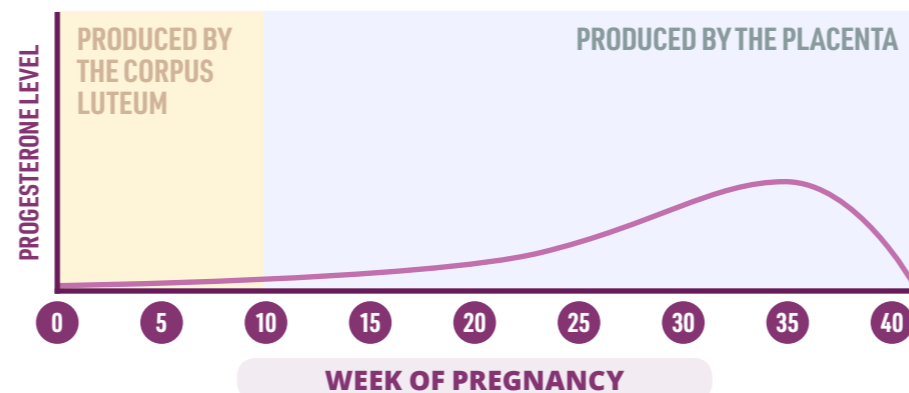
SIX KEY HORMONES IN PREGNANCY

HUMAN CHORIONIC GONADOTROPIN



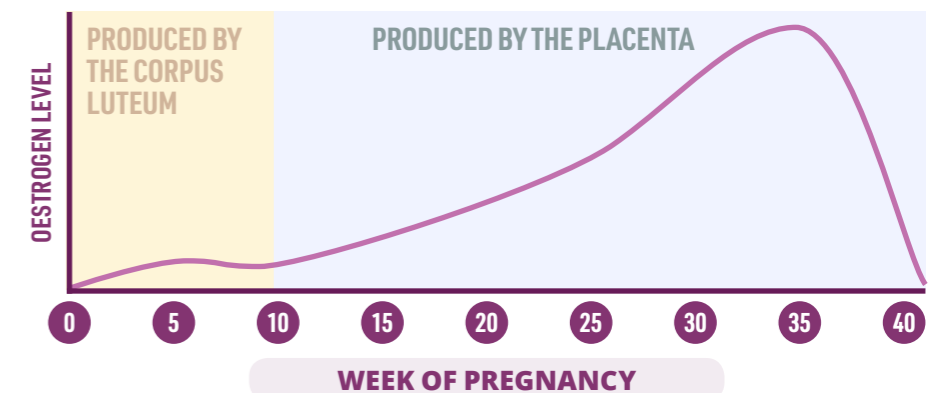
hCG is produced by the placenta after implantation. It supports the function of the corpus luteum, a temporary structure in the ovaries essential in early pregnancy. It's also the hormone detected by pregnancy tests.

PROGESTERONE



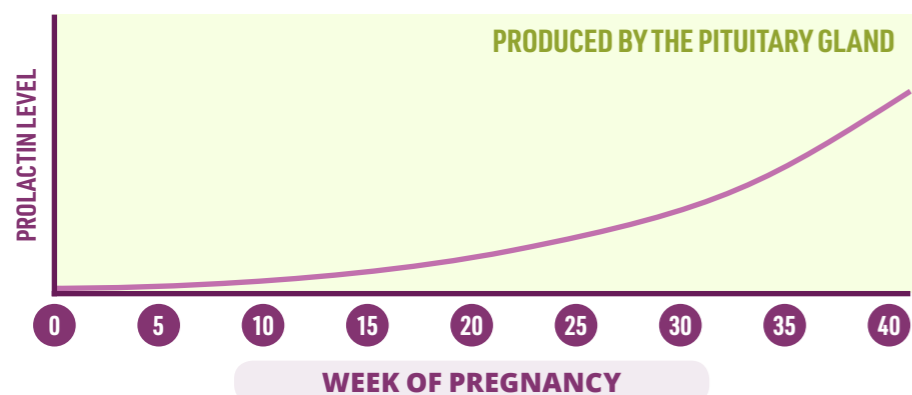
Progesterone helps establish the placenta. It stimulates growth of blood vessels that supply the womb and inhibits contraction of the uterus so it grows as the baby does. It also strengthens pelvic wall muscles for labour.

OESTROGEN



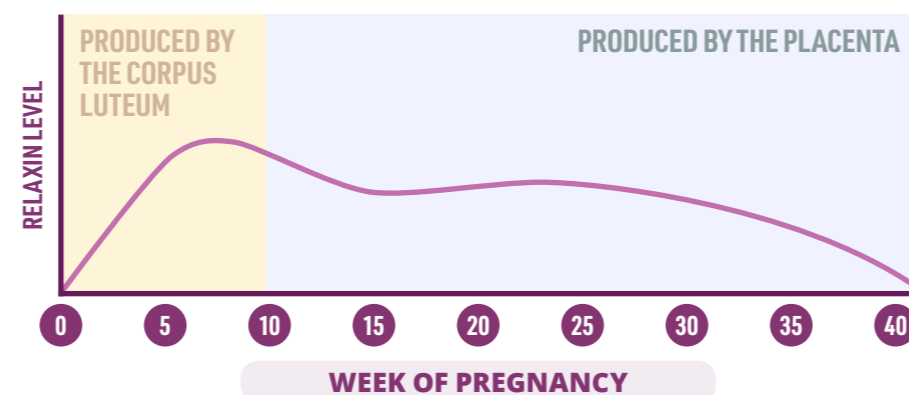
Oestrogen helps the uterus grow, maintains its lining, and helps foetal organs develop. Activates and regulates production of other hormones. With progesterone, stimulates breast growth and milk duct development.

PROLACTIN



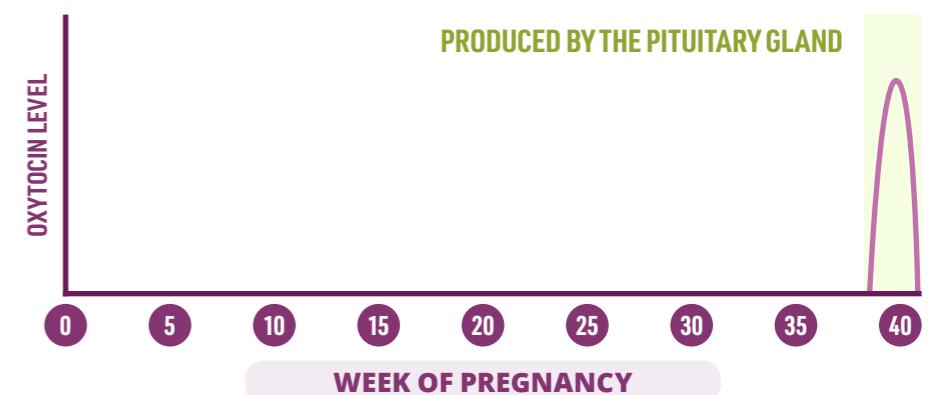
Prolactin is the main hormone needed to produce breast milk. It contributes to enlargement of the mammary glands and prepares them for milk production. Progesterone inhibits lactation during pregnancy.

RELAXIN



Relaxin inhibits uterus contraction to prevent premature birth. It relaxes blood vessels, increasing blood flow to the placenta and kidneys. It relaxes the joints of the pelvis and softens and lengthens the cervix during birth.

OXYTOCIN



Oxytocin levels rise at the start of labour, stimulating contractions of uterine muscle. It triggers production of prostaglandins, which increase contractions further. If labour doesn't start naturally, it can be used to induce it.

