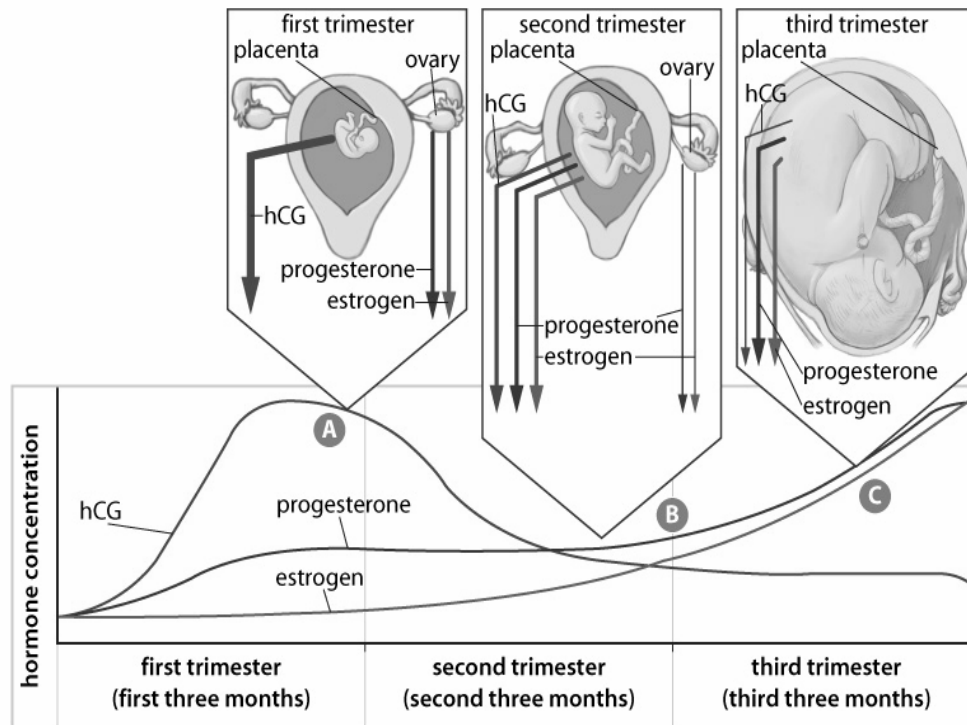


Hormone Levels During Pregnancy



A Human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG) increases until it reaches a maximum concentration near the end of the first trimester. Then it decreases to a low level for the remainder of the pregnancy.

B Progesterone continues to increase until it levels off near the end of the pregnancy. Early in the pregnancy, progesterone is produced by the corpus luteum in the ovary. By the second trimester, its production shifts to the placenta.

C Estrogen levels increase slowly throughout the pregnancy, but they increase more quickly as the end of the pregnancy approaches. Early in the pregnancy, estrogen is produced only in the ovary. By the second trimester, its production shifts to the placenta.

hCG, progesterone, and estrogen are secreted from various sources during pregnancy. Early in pregnancy, estrogen and progesterone are secreted by the corpus luteum. During mid-pregnancy, there is a shift toward secretion of these hormones by the placenta. Late in pregnancy, these hormones are secreted solely by the placenta. (The thickness of the arrows represents the relative concentrations of these hormones.)