



How does a human embryo form? First, an unfertilized egg travels from the ovary to the uterus through the Fallopian tubes. Multiple sperm traveling through the tubes will try to fertilize the egg. Once one of the sperm is successful, development begins.

The fertilized egg divides into multiple cells on its way to the uterus. After about five days, it forms a structure called a blastocyst.

The cells inside the blastocyst, known as the inner cell mass, will eventually develop into the embryo. The outer cells of the blastocyst will develop into the embryo's placenta and other supporting tissues.

Pregnancy begins when the blastocyst attaches to the wall of the uterus. The inner cell mass forms a disc, and the cells in the disc begin a process called gastrulation. First, some cells move inward, forming a groove on one side of the disc. This groove will determine the embryo's right-and-left body symmetry as it develops.

As cells move inward along the groove, they organize themselves into three layers — the ectoderm, mesoderm, and endoderm. These three layers, called the germ layers, will develop into different parts of the embryo. As development proceeds, the cells continue to move, divide, and make new structures. About eight weeks after fertilization, most of the embryo's key body parts and organs will have formed.