

Maternity Services

Testing for Down's, Edward's and Patau's Syndromes in Pregnancy

Information for parents-to-be



This leaflet explains the screening tests for Down's, Edward's and Patau's syndromes that are offered during pregnancy to women in Oxfordshire. It should help you decide whether or not to be tested. It is an extra source of information that you should read alongside our booklet "Screening tests for you and your baby".

What tests will I be offered?

All women in England are offered screening tests for Down's, Edward's and Patau's syndromes in accordance with nationally set quality standards and guidance.

These **screening** tests do not give a definite answer, but tell you whether you are at increased risk of having a baby with Down's, Edward's and Patau's syndromes. If you are at increased risk, we will then offer you a **diagnostic** test, which gives a definite answer. We do not offer diagnostic tests to all women as they increase the risk of miscarriage. Screening tests do not increase the risk of miscarriage.

What do the screening tests involve?

There are two screening tests:

- **The Nuchal Combined Test**

This test is offered to women who are less than 14 weeks pregnant at the time of the nuchal scan. It involves taking a blood sample from the mother and an ultrasound scan of the fluid at the back of the baby's neck. This is referred to as the nuchal translucency or NT.

This scan measurement, combined with the mother's age, weight, and biochemical markers in the blood sample, are used to calculate the risk of the baby being affected by Down's syndrome and/or Edward's and Patau's syndromes. This test is suitable for multiple pregnancies.

The biochemical markers can also provide additional information about the risks of complications later in pregnancy, for example, pre-eclampsia or problems with the placenta.

Occasionally it may not be possible to see the specific views of the baby that this scan requires. If this happens you will be given further advice at the time.

- **The Quadruple Test**

This test is offered to women who are more than 14 weeks pregnant at the time of the scan, or for whom it has not been technically possible to obtain the measurement required for the nuchal scan. The Quadruple Test is a blood test performed at 15-20 weeks of pregnancy.

Four biochemical markers in the blood are measured and, with the mother's age and weight, are used to calculate the risk of the baby being affected by Down's syndrome only.

What happens next?

Whether you have the Nuchal Combined or Quadruple Test, the results are available within two weeks of testing. The results are given in the form of risk figures which tell you how likely it is that the baby has Down's syndrome and/or Edward's and Patau's syndromes. For example, a result of 1 in 450 means that there is a 1 in 450 chance of the baby being affected by that particular syndrome.

If the test shows the risk is lower than 1 in 150, then no further testing is offered. The next step for you will be the mid-pregnancy ultrasound scan.

If the result is 150 or above it is classed as being in the 'increased risk' group. The Specialist Midwives in Fetal Medicine at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford will contact you and offer you an appointment to discuss the result. Women in this 'increased risk' group are offered a diagnostic test.

If the biochemical markers show the possibility of increased risk of any other complications with your pregnancy, you will receive a telephone call inviting you for an appointment with a consultant obstetrician. We will also arrange an extended mid-pregnancy scan to check on how well your placenta is working.

Choosing whether or not to have these tests is an important decision for you and your baby. You need to make the decision that is right for you. You may find it helpful to discuss this further with your midwife or GP.

Further information

The following websites give more information about antenatal screening which you may find helpful.

NHS Choices

Website: www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/screening-amniocentesis-downs-syndrome.aspx

University of Oxford's Healthtalkonline

Website: <http://healthtalkonline.org/peoples-experiences/pregnancy-children>

Antenatal Results and Choices Support Charity

Website: www.arc-uk.org

Tel: 0845 077 2290

Tel: 0207 713 7486 (from mobile)

Down's Syndrome Association

Website: www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/

Tel: 0333 1212 300

SOFTUK

Support organisation for Edward's and Patau's syndromes

Tel: 0121 351 3122

Website: www.soft.org.uk/

How to contact us

If you have any questions or concerns please contact:

Fetal Medicine

Level 6, Women's Centre

John Radcliffe Hospital

Tel: 01865 221 716

Screening Co-ordinator

Tel: 01865 221 087

(Answerphone message service available, if calling outside office hours)

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

Author: Annie Roberts
Screening Coordinator, Women's Centre
November 2015
Review: November 2018
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Oxford OX3 9DU
www.ouh.nhs.uk/information

