

Screening for Growth Restriction

Perinatal Services - Maternity

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

Introduction

You have been given this leaflet as one of the serum markers on the combined/quad screening test has been reported to be higher or lower than expected. Of the markers we screen for in pregnancy, three relate to growth restriction. These markers are low pregnancy associated plasma protein (Papp-A), Alpha fetoprotein (AFP) and Inhibin A.

What is PAPP-A?

PAPP-A is a hormone that is produced by the placenta in pregnancy. It is one of two hormones that are measured during the 12 week combined screening test.

Low levels of PAPP-A can be associated with Down's syndrome (an extra chromosome 21), Edward's (extra chromosome 18) and Patau's syndrome (extra chromosome 13). If your baby has an increased risk for these chromosome differences, one of the antenatal screening midwives will have already contacted you before sending you this letter.

Studies have also shown that low PAPP-A may also be associated with small babies (small for gestational age/SGA). An unborn baby is small if, at that stage of pregnancy, his or her size or estimated weight on scan is in the lowest 10% of babies. This means the smallest ten out of every 100 babies.

What is AFP?

AFP is a protein normally made by the baby's liver. It is found in the fluid surrounding the baby in the womb (amniotic fluid) and goes through the placenta into the mother's blood stream. It is one of four hormones that are measured during second trimester screening for Down's syndrome (Quad) test.

Studies have shown that pregnant women with higher blood AFP levels may be at an increased risk of delivering a small for gestational age (SGA) baby.

What is Inhibin A?

Inhibin A is a hormone produced by the placenta during pregnancy. High levels of inhibin A, identified on the second trimester screening test for Down's syndrome can be associated with abnormal placental function. This may increase the risk of fetal growth restriction (FGR). This refers to babies who do not reach their growth potential.

What does this mean for you and your pregnancy?

Whilst not all women with abnormal low or high serum markers will have an SGA/FGR baby, the fact that we are aware of these levels means we can monitor the growth of your baby more closely during pregnancy.

You will have your routine anomaly scan between 18-20 weeks. You will also be offered a Uterine Artery Doppler assessment (UtAD). This is a simple ultrasound scan whereby a doppler ultrasound measurement is used to check the blood flow in the uterine arteries. (Please refer to the separate leaflet which provides more information about this). After the UtAD has been performed, the scan findings will be reviewed, and a detailed plan of care will be put into place. This may include further ultrasound scans to measure the growth of your baby at 28, 32 and 36 weeks.

You will also be advised to take daily 150mg of low dose Aspirin at night. You will have received an information leaflet which will explain in more detail the importance of taking this and any side effects.

Aspirin

Aspirin can help the way the placenta works and is effective by preventing placental dysfunction. Placental dysfunction is the main cause of fetal growth restriction and of pre-eclampsia. Not all women can take Aspirin if they have a known allergy or hypersensitivity to other medications such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID) or are under the age of 16.

Caution should be taken in all of the following:-

- History of gastrointestinal bleeding
- Active peptic ulcer disease
- Other sources of gastrointestinal or genitourinary bleeding
- Severe hepatic dysfunction
- Bleeding disorders, for example, haemophilia.

Low dose Aspirin is not associated with any increase adverse events in the baby and does not seem to increase the risks of bleeding or bruising.

Is there anything I can do to help my baby to grow well?

If you smoke, it is extremely important that you stop. Smoking can affect the placenta and the baby's growth. Your midwife can refer you for help to stop smoking or you can refer yourself. Protecting your baby from tobacco smoke is one of the best things you can do to give your child a healthy start in life.

It can be difficult to stop smoking, but it is never too late to quit. Self-referral options are:

- See your GP who can refer you to a stop smoking service
- Contact a member of the Maternity Stopping Smoking Support team on 07811 524275 or 07787 285463

Who can I speak to if I need further information?

You are welcome to phone one of the antenatal screening or fetal medicine midwives if you have any queries or concerns. Receiving the news that you have low PAPP-A levels may cause anxiety but please be assured that the majority of babies will have normal growth and the pregnancy will progress normally.

Contact details

Antenatal Screening Midwives

01902 307999 Ext 86552 Mon – Fri 08.00 – 17.00

Mobile: 07967 439945

Fetal Medicine Midwives

01902 307999 Ext 85143 Mon – Fri 09.00 – 17.00

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。