

# PRENATAL TESTING

## INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Prenatal testing is the genetic testing of a foetus during pregnancy.

### WHO SHOULD CONSIDER PRENATAL TESTING?

Women who are at increased risk of having a child with a genetic condition.

Women who have an 'increased risk' screening result of having a baby with Down syndrome.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF HAVING A PRENATAL TEST?

We know that sometimes the test can cause a miscarriage.

Approximately 1 in every 50 (2%) women who have a CVS will miscarry as a result of the procedure.

Approximately 1 in every 200 (0.5%) women who have an amniocentesis will miscarry as a result of the procedure.

Other than this, there is no evidence that prenatal testing is harmful to your baby as the test is carried out under ultrasound guidance.

### WHEN IS PRENATAL TESTING CARRIED OUT?

CVS is carried out around 12 weeks' of pregnancy.

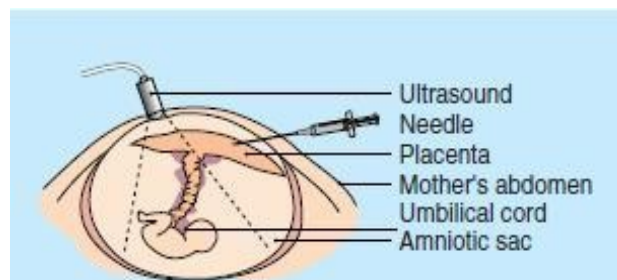
Amniocentesis is carried out around 16 weeks' of pregnancy.

## HOW IS THE TEST PERFORMED?

The test involves taking a small amount of placental tissue (for a CVS) or amniotic fluid that surrounds the baby in the womb (for an amniocentesis). This contains cells from the baby that are tested in the laboratory.

Before the test is performed, an ultrasound scan is carried out to check your dates and the position of both the baby and the placenta.

The abdomen is first cleaned with antiseptic solution. Under ultrasound guidance, a fine needle is then passed into the womb and a sample of the tissue or fluid is removed with a syringe and sent to the laboratory. Very occasionally, it is not possible to perform the test at the first appointment and you need to come back in 1-2 weeks' time. The test usually takes approximately 10-20 minutes.



## IS THE PRENATAL TEST PAINFUL?

Most women say that the test is uncomfortable rather than painful and feels similar to 'period pain'.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE TEST?

We encourage you to bring a companion with you for support during and after the test. It is a good idea to take things easy for a couple of days, avoiding any heavy lifting or strenuous exercise. The 'period pain' feeling may persist for 24-48 hours. This should settle with Paracetamol, which is safe to take during pregnancy. If you have any other symptoms, such as leaking fluid or bleeding, or develop a high temperature, please contact your midwife.

Your clinician will let you know how long the results might take.

Very occasionally (1-2% of cases) the results are not clear and the procedure might need to be repeated.

## WHAT IF THE RESULTS ARE ABNORMAL?

If the results show anything abnormal, you would be told what the abnormality is and how this could affect your pregnancy. You would have the chance to discuss the result fully before making any decisions.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### Your local genetics service:

South East of Scotland Clinical Genetic Service:	MMC, Western General Hospital Crewe Road South, Edinburgh EH4 2XU Telephone: 0131 537 1116
North of Scotland Genetics Service:	Department of Clinical Genetics Ashgrove House, Foresterhill Aberdeen AB25 2AZ Telephone: 01224 552120
East of Scotland Genetics Service:	Human Genetics Unit Level 6, Ninewells Hospital Dundee DD1 9SY Telephone: 01382 632035
West of Scotland Genetics Service:	Level 2A Laboratory Medicine The Queen Elizabeth University Hospital 1345 Govan Road, Glasgow G51 4TF Telephone: 0141 354 9201

### Your local Fetal Medicine Unit:

Edinburgh:	The Simpson Centre for Reproductive Health Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, 51 Little France Crescent Edinburgh EH16 4SA
Aberdeen:	Fetal Medicine Unit Aberdeen Maternity Hospital, Foresterhill Aberdeen AB25 2ZL
Dundee:	Antenatal Clinic, Level 7 Ninewells Hospital Dundee DD1 9SY
Glasgow:	Ian Donald Fetal Medicine Unit Queen Mother's Maternity Hospital Glasgow G3 8SH