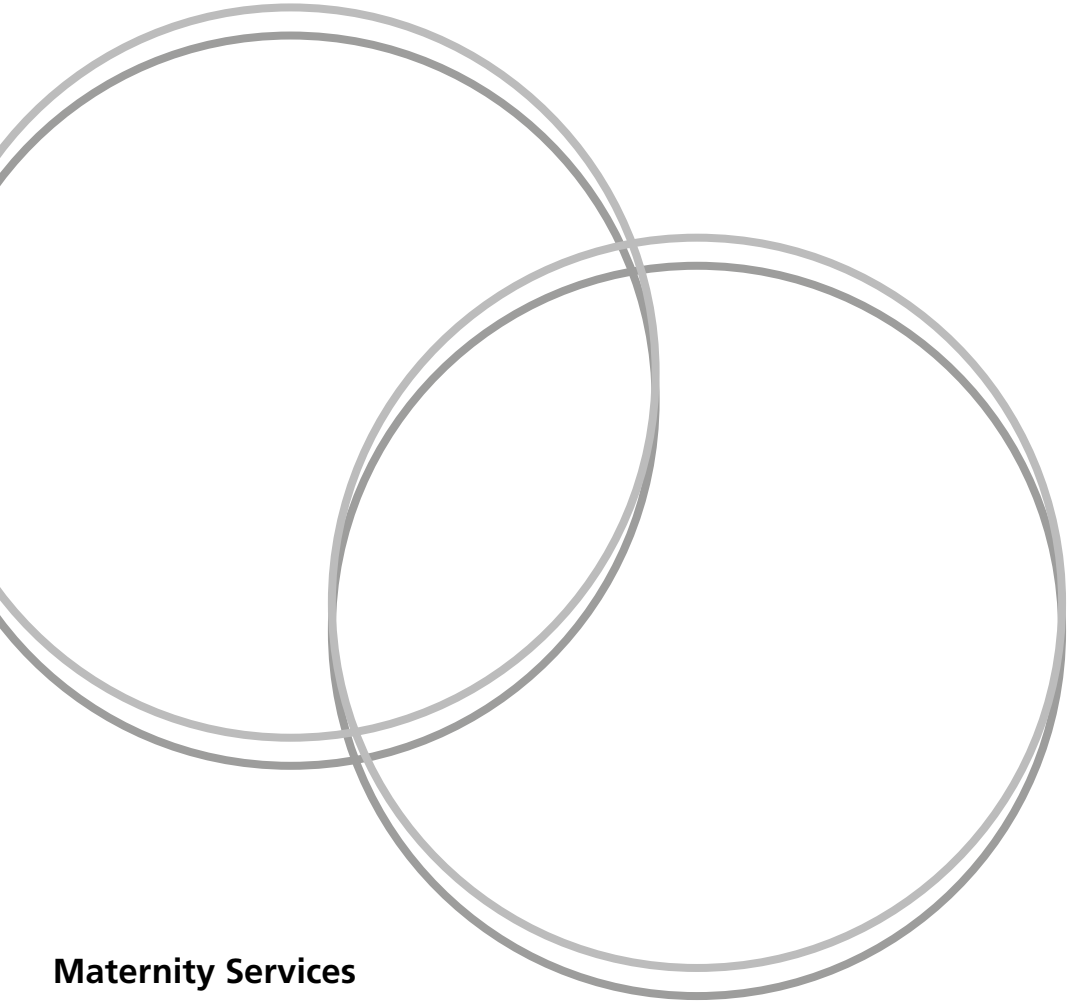
NHS
Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

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

Information for parents-to-be



Maternity Services

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 the national booklet 'Screening tests for you and your baby'.

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.

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 chance of having a baby with Down's, Edward's and Patau's syndromes. If you are at increased chance, we will then offer you an appointment with Fetal Medicine Unit to discuss further screening or diagnostic tests.

It is important to understand that there is still a small chance of giving birth to a baby with Down's, Edwards' or Patau's syndromes because the screening tests do not detect some babies with these conditions. A lower chance result does not mean that there is no chance at all that the baby has Down's, Edwards' or Patau's syndromes, just that it is unlikely.

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 + 2 days pregnant at the time of the nuchal scan. It involves an ultrasound scan of the fluid at the back of the baby's neck – this is referred to as the nuchal translucency or NT and taking a blood sample from the mother.

  This scan measurement, combined with the mother's age, weight, and biochemical markers in the blood sample, are used to calculate the chance of the baby having 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 chance of possible complications later in pregnancy.

  Examples of possible complications are pre-eclampsia or problems with the placenta and baby's growth. If your pregnancy is identified as having increased chance of any of these complications, you will be contacted to discuss a plan of care.

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 + 1 day 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 from 14 weeks +2 days to 20 weeks +0 days of pregnancy.

  Four biochemical markers in the blood are measured and, with the mother's age and weight, are used to calculate the chance of your baby having 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 a ratio which tells you how likely or not 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 having that particular syndrome. Or the other way around, a 449 in 450 chance that the baby would not have the syndrome.

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

If the result is 1 in 150 or above it is classed as being in the 'increased chance' 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 chance' group are offered further screening or diagnostic tests.

Further information

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

Antenatal Results and Choices Support Charity

Website: **www.arc-uk.org**

Down's Syndrome Association

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

SOFTUK

Support organisation for Edward's and Patau's syndromes

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**

(An answerphone message service is available if you are calling outside of office hours)

Further Information

Please speak to the department where you are being seen if you would like an interpreter. You will find their contact details on your appointment letter. Please also ask them if you would like this information leaflet in another format, such as:

- easy read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronically
- in another language.

We have tried to make this information meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They will be happy to help.

Author: Screening Coordinator, Women's Centre
April 2021
Review: April 2024
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
www.ouh.nhs.uk/information

Leaflet reference number: OMI 67324