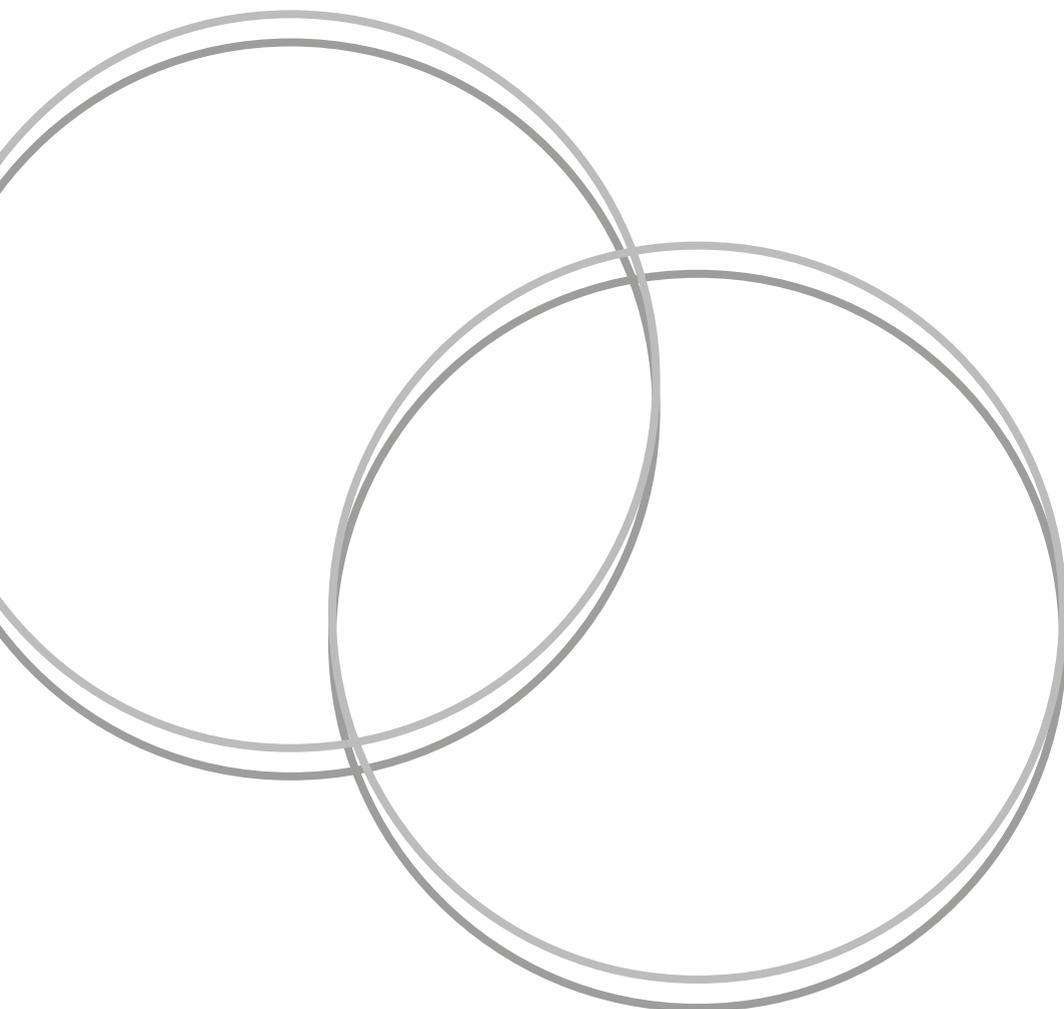




Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Echogenic Bowel on Ultrasound Scan

Information leaflet



What is echogenic bowel?

Echogenic bowel is a term used to describe the appearance of the baby's bowel. It means that on ultrasound scan, the baby's bowel appears brighter than usual.

What does this mean?

In most cases the cause is never found and it often disappears.

One of the known reasons for echogenic bowel is an early bleed in the pregnancy (which you may not have been aware of). Echogenic bowel may be caused by the baby swallowing some blood in the amniotic fluid (the fluid in the sac that surrounds the baby in the womb). This is not harmful to the baby.

In some cases, echogenic bowel can be associated with cystic fibrosis. Cystic fibrosis is a serious inherited disease which affects the baby's lungs and digestion. It affects both male and female babies equally and means that they will need to have lifelong treatment.

We offer to take blood from both parents to check if either parent are carriers of the cystic fibrosis gene. Around 3 in 100 babies who have echogenic bowel at the anomaly scan are found to have cystic fibrosis and 97 in 100 do not. All newborn babies in the UK are offered screening for Cystic Fibrosis when they are born as part of the Newborn Bloodspot Screening test.

Echogenic bowel can also be associated with an infection called cytomegalovirus (CMV). We will offer to take your blood and test to see if you have recently had this infection. CMV is a common virus that causes few symptoms in most people.

What happens next?

If your baby is found to have an echogenic bowel during an ultrasound scan, you will be offered a referral to the Fetal Medicine Unit (FMU). The FMU team will review your scan findings and are likely to offer you an additional scan to confirm these findings. The FMU midwives will contact you by telephone to arrange an appointment.

The team will explore if the echogenic bowel is still present during this appointment. They will also look at other details on the scan and will offer to take blood tests that may help to identify the cause of the echogenic bowel.

The team will decide if a follow up scan later in pregnancy is necessary. The FMU team will explain the next steps and will be in telephone contact with you.

Contact details

We understand that this can be a worrying time for you, your partner and your family. If you have any questions or feel you need any support, please call the Fetal Medicine Unit on the number below.

Please note: the Fetal Medicine Unit team will need time to review your referral and will contact you as soon as possible after your call.

Telephone: **01865 221 716**

(9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Further information

The NHS website listed below includes helpful leaflets and advice about the fetal anomaly scan screening programme:

www.fetalanomaly.screening.nhs.uk

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

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

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www.ouh.nhs.uk/information



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Making a difference across our hospitals

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