



Maternity unit

Low PAPP-A

This information leaflet has been sent to you because you have been found to have low levels of PAPP-A on your antenatal screening blood tests.

What is PAPP-A?

Pregnancy Associated Plasma Protein A (PAPP-A) is produced by your placenta. It is one of the hormones measured as part of the combined screening test you opted for at 11-14 weeks of pregnancy.

Although low levels of PAPP-A can be associated with Down's syndrome, your specific test was reassuring and you were found to be at low risk of having a baby born with Down's syndrome.

There is some evidence to suggest that low levels of PAPP-A can sometimes be associated with your placenta not working as well as it should do, which can lead to your baby not meeting its growth potential (growing normally) and being born either earlier or smaller than expected.

What does this mean?

Most babies born to mothers with a low PAPP-A will be a normal weight at birth.

However as some babies born to women with low PAPP-A can be born growth restricted (smaller than expected) or preterm (earlier than expected), we would like to refer you to a consultant obstetrician. They will make a plan with you to monitor your baby's growth by performing regular (3-4 weekly) ultrasound scans starting at 28 weeks.

Measurements will be taken of your baby's head, abdomen (tummy) and femur (thigh bone) and used to calculate your baby's estimated weight. The sonographer will also check the amount of water around your baby and the blood flow going to your baby through the umbilical cord. These measurements will be plotted on a chart and your baby's estimated weight on your personalised growth chart.

If these measurements plot within the normal range, you will be given an appointment for your next scan and sent home to see your midwife or consultant at your next pre-arranged visit. If any of the measurements plot outside of the normal range, or your baby is starting to show signs of reduced growth, you will be asked to attend the Day Assessment Unit (DAU) on the Maternity Unit to discuss a plan of care with one of the obstetricians.

Your Obstetrician or midwife may also wish for you to take Aspirin. This will depend on other aspects of your health and pregnancy and can be discussed at your next clinic appointment.

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

As smoking can affect the placenta and the growth of the baby, we recommend all pregnant women stop smoking. We have a specialist team of midwives that can help you by providing support and nicotine replacement therapies. You can either speak to your midwife for a referral or email smokingcessation.midwife@dchft.nhs.uk giving your contact details and one of the team will be in touch.

Monitoring your baby's movements is a very good way for you to check your baby's wellbeing. If your baby's movements slow down or stop you must contact the Maternity Unit immediately.

If you would like additional information about PAPP-A and the monitoring of your baby's growth, please speak to your midwife. They will be more than happy to help.

Contact Numbers:

We hope that you have found this information useful. If you have any questions or are worried about anything, please call and speak with our antenatal screening co-ordinators

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About this leaflet:

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References:

The investigation and Management of the Small-For-Gestational-Age Fetus. *Green-top Guideline No 31*. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, please email pals@dchft.nhs.uk.



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