

Low PAPP-A

Information for Parents

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Your recent combined screening test for Down's Syndrome and combined Edwards and Patau's Syndrome has detected a low PAPP-A.

What is PAPP-A?

Pregnancy associated plasma protein 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 combined screening test for Down's, Edwards and Patau's Syndrome. You will have already received the results of the combined test via letter or phone call from the screening team.

Studies have shown that low PAPP-A levels may be associated with low birth weight babies and early deliveries. Because of this, national guidelines suggest that extra ultrasound scans should be considered to check the growth of babies when a low PAPP-A level has been found.

When will I have the growth scan?

We will ask you to attend the Maternity Ultrasound Department between 22 and 24 weeks for a uterine artery Doppler ultrasound (to check the blood flow between you and your baby) as well as growth scans from 32, 36 and 39 weeks as a minimum to check the growth of the baby, the placenta and the amniotic fluid (water) levels. From 25 weeks, your midwife will also plot the growth of your bump on your individualized **grow** chart.

If there are any concerns about the baby's growth, we will arrange further appointments or referrals for you as appropriate.

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

If you smoke, it is extremely important that you stop. Smoking can seriously affect the function of the placenta and the baby's growth. Your midwife can refer you for help to stop smoking or you can refer yourself to Baby Clear NHS smoking cessation service:

St Helens Tel: 07718 571 778

Knowsley Tel: 0151 426 7462

Halton Tel: 0300 029 0029

Who can I speak to if I need further information?

You are welcome to phone one of the antenatal screening midwives if you have any queries or concerns on 0151 478 7615 or call Antenatal Clinic on 0151 430 1493.

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.


For those babies that are found to be small you will have the reassurance of close monitoring with the midwifery team and the obstetricians in our Feto Maternal Assessment Unit.

Further information

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/patient-leaflets/having-a-small-baby/

('Having a small baby' leaflet)



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