WHAT ARE (PRENATAL) MATERNAL SCREENING TESTS?

Maternal screening tests tell you the chance that a baby could have one of three birth defects:

- Down syndrome
- Trisomy 18
- Open neural tube defect

Screening tests are different than diagnostic tests. A screening test tells you if there is a higher chance that a baby has a birth defect. A diagnostic test tells you with accuracy if your baby has one of these birth defects. If a pregnancy is identified to be at a high risk for a birth defect by screening, the next step would be to talk about diagnostic testing with a pregnancy care provider or genetic counselor.

Screening tests do not tell you information about other types of birth defects. Screening tests do not hurt your baby. The decision to have a screening test is yours. If you have a family member with one of these birth defects, or a family member with another birth defect, talk with your provider about what testing might be right for you.

Most women that have a high risk screening test will deliver normal babies.

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For more information,
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Prenatal Risk Assessment Screening

Patient Information

TYPES OF (PRENATAL) MATERNAL SCREENING TESTS

- First trimester
- Integrated
- Sequential
- Second Trimester Quad Screen

FIRST TRIMESTER SCREENING TEST

- Ultrasound and blood test at 10-13 weeks during the pregnancy.
- Detects 85% of babies with Down syndrome and 80% of babies with Trisomy 18.
- Results learned in the first trimester (usually by 14 weeks).
- A blood test in the second trimester is needed to screen for open neural tube defects.

INTEGRATED SCREENING TEST

- Ultrasound and blood test at 10-13 weeks followed by a second blood test in second trimester.
- Detects 87% of babies with Down syndrome, 90% of babies with Trisomy 18 and 80% of babies with an open neural tube defect.
- Results learned in second trimester (usually by 18 weeks).
- Can be performed without ultrasound but this lowers the detection of Down syndrome and Trisomy 18.

SEQUENTIAL SCREENING TEST

- Ultrasound and blood test at 10-13 weeks followed by a second blood test in second trimester.
- Detects 86% of babies with Down syndrome, 90% of babies with Trisomy 18 and 80% of babies with an open neural tube defect.
- Two sets of results are given. One is learned in the first trimester. The second is learned in the second trimester.

SECOND TRIMESTER QUAD SCREEN

- Blood test in second trimester.
- Detects 80% of babies with Down syndrome, 80% of babies with Trisomy 18 and 80% of babies with an open neural tube defect.
- Results learned in second trimester (usually by 18 weeks).

WHAT IS DOWN SYNDROME?

- Down syndrome is due to a chromosome abnormality that causes mental retardation and usually other birth defects such as heart problems.
- Down syndrome usually does not run in families.
- A woman of any age can have a child with Down syndrome, but the chance increases as women get older.

WHAT IS TRISOMY 18?

- Trisomy 18 is a chromosome abnormality that causes severe mental and physical birth defects. Most babies with this die within the first year of life.
- Trisomy 18 usually does not run in families.
- A woman of any age can have a child with Trisomy 18, but the chance increases as women get older.

WHAT IS AN OPEN NEURAL TUBE DEFECT?

- An open neural tube defect is an opening in a baby's spine or skull.
- An opening in the skull is called anencephaly. These babies do not survive.
- An opening in the spine is called spina bifida. This may lead to paralysis and hydrocephaly (water on the brain).