

Patient advice sheet

Quadruple (Quad) testing for Down's Syndrome

If it was not possible to obtain a nuchal translucency measurement, or you're more than 14 weeks into your pregnancy, you'll be offered a test called the quadruple blood screening test between 14 and 20 weeks of pregnancy. This only screens for Down's syndrome and is not as accurate as the combined test.

Can this screening test harm me or my baby?

The screening test cannot harm you or the baby, but it's important to consider carefully whether to have this test.

It cannot tell you for certain whether the baby does or does not have Down's syndrome, but it can provide information that may lead to further important decisions. For example, you may be offered diagnostic tests that can tell you for certain whether the baby has these conditions, but these tests have a risk of miscarriage.

Do I need to have screening for Down's syndrome?

You do not need to have this screening test – it's your choice. Some people want to find out the chance of their baby having these conditions while others do not.

If you choose not to have the screening test for Down's syndrome, you can still choose to have other tests, such as the 20-week scan.

If you choose not to have the screening test for these conditions, it's important to understand that if you have a scan at any point during your pregnancy, it could pick up physical conditions.

The person scanning you will always tell you if any conditions are found.

Getting your results

The screening test will not tell you whether your baby does or does not have Down's syndrome – it will tell you if you have a higher or lower chance of having a baby with this condition.

If your screening test returns a lower-chance result, you will be told within 2 weeks by a letter sent to your home address. If it shows a higher chance, you will be contacted by one of the screening midwives within 3 working days of the result being available to discuss the test results and the options you have.

Possible results

Lower-chance result

If the screening test shows that the chance of having a baby with Down's syndrome is lower than 1 in 150, this is a lower-chance result. More than 95 out of 100 screening test results will be lower chance.

A lower-chance result does not mean there's no chance at all of the baby having Down's syndrome, Edwards' syndrome or Patau's syndrome.

Higher-chance result

If the screening test shows that the chance of the baby having Down's syndrome is higher than 1 in 150 – that is, anywhere between 1 in 2 and 1 in 150 – this is called a higher-chance result.

Fewer than 1 in 20 results will be higher chance. This means that out of 100 pregnancies screened for Down's syndrome, fewer than 5 will have a higher-chance result.

A higher-chance result does not mean the baby definitely has Down's syndrome.

Will I need further tests?

If you have a lower-chance result, you will not be offered a further test.

If you have a higher-chance result, you can decide to:

- not have any further testing
- have a second screening test called non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT) – this is a blood test, which can give you a more accurate screening result and help you to decide whether to have a diagnostic test or not
- have a diagnostic test, such as amniocentesis or chorionic villus sampling (CVS) straight away – this will tell you for certain whether or not your baby has Down's syndrome, Edwards' syndrome or Patau's syndrome, but in rare cases can cause a miscarriage

You can decide to have NIPT for:

- all 3 conditions
- Down's syndrome only
- Edwards' syndrome and Patau's syndrome only

You can also decide to have a diagnostic test after NIPT.

NIPT is completely safe and will not harm your baby.

Whatever results you get from any of the screening or diagnostic tests, you will get care and support to help you to decide what to do next.

For more information, scan the QR code or go to

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/screening-tests-for-you-and-your-baby>



Useful telephone numbers

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this leaflet, you can contact the Screening Midwives on 01296 255800

The charity Antenatal Results and Choices (ARC) runs a helpline from Monday to Friday, 10am to 5.30pm on 020 7713 7486.

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up-to-date and accurate as possible, but please note that it is subject to change. Please therefore always check specific advice on any concerns you may have with your doctor.

How can you help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection prevention and control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection prevention and control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. Please follow our infection prevention and control guidelines when visiting our healthcare sites. Further information is available on our website.

Patient Advice Sheet

If you would like a copy of this information on audiotape, in large print or translated, please call the Patient Advice Liaison Service on 01296 831120 or email bht.pals@nhs.net

Division of Women, Children & Sexual Health Services

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