



Raised AFP (Alpha-fetoprotein) results in pregnancy

You are receiving this information leaflet with an accompanying letter for an appointment with your consultant, as a protein called AFP levels in your blood test have been found to be raised.

What is AFP?

At University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, all eligible pregnant women are offered first and second trimester screening tests for Down's syndrome. Part of the second trimester screening involves taking a blood sample to analyse for a protein called AFP (alpha-fetoprotein).

AFP is a protein that is tested as a part of the second trimester screening (Quadruple test) for Down's syndrome that you consented to have.

Based on the above, your screening test result for Down's syndrome has been reported as low risk. However, the level of the AFP hormone is slightly higher than average. **This does not mean that your baby has an increased chance of having Down's syndrome.**

Why is AFP important?

Studies have shown that raised AFP may be associated with reduced placental function and associated with babies with a lower birth weight. Because of this, national guidelines suggest that extra scans should be considered to check the growth of your baby when a raised AFP level has been found. It is your choice whether you wish to accept or decline extra growth scans, you can request further information or talk to a healthcare professional to help you make an informed decision. Whether you accept or decline extra scans, you can change your mind at any point.

What happens next?

We suggest that you have an appointment with your consultant, where they will discuss the extra scans with you and make sure they are booked.

If you consent, we will arrange regular scans to monitor the baby's growth and wellbeing throughout your pregnancy. We will send you letters inviting you to these scanning appointments.

If you were previously booked under low-risk midwifery-led care, you will be transferred to consultant-led care. You can request an appointment with a consultant midwife to discuss your birth options and a personalised care plan, should you wish. If you consent, regular growth scans and appointments will be arranged, if these are not already planned during your pregnancy.

The scans will be offered monthly starting from around when you are 32 weeks pregnant. In some cases, earlier scans from 26-28 weeks onwards may be required and you will be informed accordingly. This allows us to assess whether your baby is continuing to grow to its full potential.

It is important that you also continue to see your community midwife at regular intervals to ensure

your pregnancy is progressing well. If your community midwife has any concerns, she will discuss this with you, you will be referred to the hospital sooner to monitor the health of you and your baby.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact the Antenatal and Newborn Screening Team on 0121 424 0928.

Department address and contact information:

Please include address where appropriate along with contact telephone numbers if not already captured in the information above.

Accessibility

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