

When you have a low PAPP-A result in pregnancy

Antenatal & Newborn Screening

Information for Patients

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What is a screening test in pregnancy?

A screening test helps us to look for certain conditions early, to give you more information about your pregnancy. We only screen for conditions where we can offer you more healthcare options. These options can be to either treat, watch or change your pregnancy care. You can choose whether you have these tests. The screening tests offered during pregnancy in England are:

- ultrasound scans
- blood tests
- blood test and ultrasound together

Ultrasound scans check that your baby's body is growing as it should.

Blood tests can show if your baby has a higher chance of a condition that is passed on by the parents. These can be conditions like sickle cell anaemia and thalassaemia.

Blood tests will check to see if you have infections such as:

- HIV
- hepatitis B
- syphilis

When blood tests are done at the same time as scans, they can help find the chance of chromosomal abnormalities, like Down's, Edwards' or Patau's syndrome.

One of the hormones measured in the screening is called **PAPP-A**.

Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
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What is PAPP-A?

The placenta makes a hormone called PAPP-A (pregnancy associated plasma protein A). It is one of two hormones measured during the screening test for Down's, Edwards and Patau's Syndrome screening.

Studies have shown that PAPP-A is low in some pregnancies.

What happens if my PAPP-A is low?

- There is a small chance that your baby's growth may slow down towards the end of your pregnancy.
- We will check baby's growth regularly by offering you extra scans later in the pregnancy. This will usually be every 3 weeks from 28 to 32 weeks of pregnancy

It can be worrying to hear that you have low PAPP-A levels. It does not change or affect the screening results that you have had so far. Even with low PAPP-A levels, most babies grow normally.

What happens next?

We will offer you a 20 week scan. This is also called the anomaly scan. We will check the blood flow to your placenta.

- If the blood flow is **normal** we will arrange for more scans. These will start at 32 weeks. We will offer scans every 3 to 4 weeks. We will offer the scans until your baby is born. The scans are to check your baby's growth.
- If the blood flow is **not normal**, we will offer the same scans plus an extra scan at 28 weeks.

At the growth scans we will check:

- your baby's growth
- the blood flow from the placenta to your baby
- the water around the baby (amniotic fluid)

We will plot your baby's growth on your electronic GROW chart. This will show if your baby is growing at a normal rate for you.

If there are any worries with your baby's growth:

- we may scan you more often
- you may be referred to see a consultant

We will discuss everything with you. We will decide together on what to do next.

It is important that you start taking 150mg of aspirin once a day. Start taking the aspirin as soon as possible after 12 weeks of pregnancy. You can do this by:

1. taking the letter that has been posted to you to your GP or
2. buying aspirin from your pharmacy.

Your community midwife will explain this in more detail at your 16 week appointment.

What can I do to help my baby's growth?

If you smoke, it is very important that you stop. Smoking can seriously affect how the placenta works and your baby's growth. Your midwife can refer you for help to stop smoking or you can refer yourself. Protecting your baby from tobacco smoke is one of the best things you can do to give your child a healthy start in life.

It can be difficult to stop smoking, but it's never too late to quit.

Help and support to stop smoking

- if you live in the City of Leicester contact the "Stop Smoking Service" <https://livewell.leicester.gov.uk/services/stop-smoking/>
- if you live in Leicestershire/Rutland contact Quit Ready on www.quitready.co.uk/

Contact details

0116 258 6111 (Option 6 for Fetal Medicine)

Antenatal Screening Team: 0116 258 4860

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على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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