

Screening in pregnancy for Down's syndrome, Edwards' syndrome and Patau's syndrome

Maternity Services

Last reviewed: January 2026

Next review: January 2029

Information for Patients

Leaflet number: 281 Version: 3

Introduction

At your first appointment with the midwife you were offered combined screening. The screening is for Down's, Edwards' and Patau's syndrome. If you would like to have these screening tests, they will be done at the same time as your dating scan.

When can I have the combined screening test?

The combined screening test can only be done when you are between 11 weeks + 2 days and 14 weeks + 1 day of pregnancy. The screening test will be done at your dating scan.

What if I do not want a screening test for these conditions?

You do not have to have the screening test. Please tell the person doing your scan (sonographer) before they start the scan.

How does the screening test work?

At the back of your baby's neck, there is a small amount of fluid. All babies have this. We can see the fluid on your scan. We measure the fluid. We call this 'nuchal translucency'. Some babies have extra fluid at the back of their neck. This can mean that there is a higher chance of them having a chromosomal problem. This could be:

- Down's syndrome
- Edward's syndrome
- Patau's syndrome
- Possible heart problems

After your scan, we will take a blood sample from you.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

We will measure the amount of 2 chemicals (HCG and PAPP-A) in your blood.

We will work out your chance of having a baby with Down's syndrome, Edwards' syndrome or Patau's syndrome. To do this we will use:

- your age
- your scan result
- the blood test results
- the number of weeks pregnant you are on the day of the blood test

More information on the tests can be found at:

1. Health for Under 5s: <https://leicestershire/services/your-maternity-service/antenatal-screening/>
2. GOV.UK: www.gov.uk/government/publications/screening-tests-for-you-and-your-baby or scan the QR code:



What happens if I cannot have the combined screening test?

We will offer you to have a blood test for Down's syndrome. This is called the quad test. In this case your screening test for Edward's or Patau's will be the 20 week scan.

You will be offered the blood test if:

- You are more than 14 weeks and 2 days pregnant at your scan.
- If we are not able to do the measurements needed. This may be because:
 - of your baby's position
 - you are above average weight.

The quad test can be done between 14 weeks + 2 days and 20 weeks + 0 days of pregnancy.

You should already have a follow-up appointment arranged. This will be with your midwife. It will be at about 15 to 16 weeks of pregnancy. If you do not have this booked, please contact your midwife to arrange this.

Getting your results

High chance group (less than 1 in 150 cases)

A midwife will contact you if your result is in the **high chance** group. This means there is a 1 in 150 chance that your baby has 1 of the conditions.

- A midwife will contact you from the hospital Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.
- A community midwife will contact you if it is the evening or over a weekend.

They will ask you to attend the hospital to talk about your result. The midwife may visit you at home. If you are not at home, they will leave a letter. The letter will ask you to contact the hospital.

Important information: If you have a high chance result, it does not mean that your baby definitely has Down's, Edwards' or Patau's syndrome.



What will happen if I am in the high chance group?

We will talk to you about your options. We will offer you more tests. The tests will depend on how many weeks pregnant you are. You will be offered either:

- 'Non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT)'. This is a 2nd screening blood test. It is more accurate than the combined or quad test. It is called non-invasive because the blood comes from you. The blood does not come from your baby.
- A diagnostic test. These tests will give you a definite answer. These tests are invasive. We test cells from the placenta (chorionic villus sample). Or we test from the fluid surrounding your baby (amniocentesis). About 1 in 200 women who have a diagnostic test will miscarry.

Low chance (1 in 150 to 5000 cases)

This means that there is a low chance that your baby has 1 of the conditions. You will get a letter with the results.

A low chance does not mean that your baby definitely does not have Down's, Edwards' or Patau's syndrome but this is very unlikely.

Please make sure you have arranged a follow-up appointment with your midwife. Your midwife will talk about the results with you.

Contact details:

Leicester Hospitals Maternity: **0116 258 6111**

If you have any questions please contact your community midwife.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net