

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 is a check to see if we can pick up on a condition before it develops or becomes a problem. We screen for conditions where we can offer you further healthcare options. These options can be to either treat, monitor or change your pregnancy care pathway to fit your needs. The screening tests offered during pregnancy in England are either ultrasound scans or blood tests, or a combination of both.

Ultrasound scans aim to check that your baby's body is developing as it should.

Blood tests can show whether your baby has a higher chance of an inherited disorder, such as sickle cell anaemia and thalassemia. They also check whether you have infections like HIV, hepatitis B or syphilis. Blood tests combined with scans can help find the chance of chromosomal abnormalities such as Down's, Edwards' or Patau's syndrome. One of the hormones measured in the screening test is called **PAPP-A** which stands for pregnancy associated plasma protein A.

What is PAPP-A?

PAPP-A (pregnancy associated plasma protein A) is a hormone that is made by the placenta in pregnancy. It is one of two hormones that are measured during the 11 to 14 week combined screening blood test.

Studies have shown that if this hormone is low there is a small chance that your baby's growth may slow down later in pregnancy. National guidelines suggest extra scans should be considered to check the growth of the baby for low PAPP-A results.

It can be worrying to hear that you have low PAPP-A levels, however please be assured that all of the screening results that you have had so far are not affected or changed by this result and most babies grow normally.

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What happens next?

After you have had your mid-pregnancy scan (also called anomaly scan - which takes place around 20 weeks and looks in detail at your baby's bones, heart, brain, spinal cord, face, kidneys and abdomen), we will arrange for you to come to the Maternity Ultrasound Department again later in your pregnancy for additional scans to check your baby's growth.

As well as checking your baby's growth, we will check the blood flow from the placenta and the water around the baby (amniotic fluid).

If there are any concerns with your baby's growth, you will be referred to see a consultant, who will discuss everything with you, and you will decide together on what to do next.

It is important that you arrange to start taking 150mg of aspirin daily by taking the letter that has been posted to you to your GP or by purchasing this from your pharmacy as soon as possible. Your community midwife will explain this in more detail at your 16 week contact or appointment.

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

If you smoke, it is extremely 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. To get help and support:

- see your GP who can refer you to a stop smoking service.
- if you live in the City of Leicester contact the 'Stop Smoking Service' on **0116 454 4000** or visit: <https://livewell.leicester.gov.uk/services/stopping-smoking/>
- if you live in Leicestershire contact Quit Ready on 0345 646 6666 or text 'ready' to 66777.

Contact details

Antenatal Services and Fetal Medicine Department:

Leicester Royal Infirmary: 0116 258 6106 / Leicester General Hospital: 0116 258 4829

Antenatal Screening Team: 0116 258 4860

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
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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