



Partners for Women's Health, PA

Meeting the changing health needs of women

TESTING IN PREGNANCY:

In women under the age of 35, the recommendations for testing in pregnancy are:

Counsel test: (once in a lifetime, can be done at any time of the pregnancy) to determine your healthy carrier status of common (and not so common) genetic diseases like Cystic Fibrosis. If one of the test results is abnormal for you, we will test the father of the baby. This testing may provide important information that will assist you in making medical decisions regarding your pregnancy.

Down Syndrome screening (also screens for Trisomy 13 and 18): this is an ultrasound and blood test between 11 and 13 weeks. If the test result is abnormal, we would either refer you to a Maternal Fetal Medicine doctor for invasive testing (amniocentesis for example) or do a blood test with more sensitivity to verify the initial test result (cell-free fetal DNA, Harmony test). Again, this would provide important information that will assist you in making medical decisions regarding your pregnancy. Some women choose to do the Harmony test first, but it may not be covered by your insurance.

Spina Bifida screening: blood test at 16 weeks known as the AFP test. If the test is abnormal, we would refer you to a Maternal Fetal Medicine doctor for an advanced ultrasound between 18 and 20 weeks to rule out a defect in the baby's brain and/or spine. We may also perform additional testing with the AFP screening for Trisomy 13, 18 and 21 (also known as Down Syndrome) if it was not done in the first trimester (for example if you missed the window for First Trimester or Harmony screen).

Anatomy ultrasound at 20 weeks: we are looking at the baby from head to toe to rule out anomalies that would impact the baby, the pregnancy and the delivery. We are also looking at the location of the placenta and the length of the cervix.

Glucose test at 28 weeks: you will be given a 10 oz bottle of liquid containing 50 grams of sugar which you will be asked to drink and then have your blood glucose level tested. This is to screen for diabetes of pregnancy. Up to 10% of patients fail this test, but only a fraction of them will really have abnormal sugars that would affect the baby. If the initial glucose test is abnormal, we will confirm the results with a 3 hour test. We will also draw a complete blood count at 28 weeks and let you know if you are developing anemia which could be treated with additional iron tablets. Women with a negative blood group (Rh negative) will also be tested for antibodies and receive an injection of Rhogam to prevent developing antibodies that could affect another pregnancy.

Group B Strep swab (of the vagina and anus) at 36 weeks: one in 5 women carry GBS in the last 5 weeks before delivery. If present, we would give you an antibiotic during labor to prevent infection when the baby goes through the birth canal. The risks are low, but the consequences of group B strep can be significant for the baby. We are essentially treating 1000 women with antibiotics to save one baby from a severe meningitis and death.

We repeat a complete blood count at 36 weeks.