

Prenatal screening: What do you want to do?

Certain screening tests can tell which women have an increased risk for specific birth defects. You will be asked if you want any of these tests. **There is usually no family history for these problems and they usually are not inherited.**

These tests provide information about 3 conditions:

- 1. Down syndrome** causes mental retardation and birth defects. A person's risk is determined by mom's age at delivery. The risk at age 30 is 1/885; at age 35 the risk is 1/335 and at age 40 it is 1/109.
- 2. Trisomy 18** is a problem similar to Down syndrome but more severe. Most babies do not survive their first year.
- 3. Neural tube defects** are abnormalities of the spine or head.

Reasons women choose **TO** have these tests:

- For reassurance
- Planning for a child who will need special help
- Because they might end a pregnancy if a baby had a problem (available in MN until about 20 weeks)

Reasons women choose **NOT** to have these tests:

- Abnormal results could make them worry even though the baby is normal
- These problems cannot be changed or fixed during the pregnancy
- Test results would not change their plans for the pregnancy

3 tests to think about:

BLOOD SCREENING (FIRST TRIMESTER or QUAD SCREEN)

Blood screening is a blood test on mom. A normal result is good news but does not rule out problems for certain.

Note: An abnormal test result **DOES NOT** mean that the baby has a problem. It means that we should offer more tests. **Most women who have an abnormal test result have a normal baby.**

AMNIOCENTESIS

This test can tell for certain that a baby does not have certain birth defects. A needle is passed through mom's skin into the bag of water around the baby. The test has a small (less than 1%) risk to cause a miscarriage

DETAILED ULTRASOUND

A detailed ultrasound can rule out many major birth defects. A normal ultrasound at 18-22 weeks is good news but does not rule out all birth defects or genetic problems. There is no known risk to ultrasound.

What do you want to do?

BLOOD SCREENING (FIRST TRIMESTER or QUAD SCREEN)

Yes

No

I would like more information

AMNIOCENTESIS

Yes

No

I would like more information

DETAILED ULTRASOUND

Yes

No

I would like more information

A genetic counselor can explain the tests and what the results mean. Even if you do not want these tests, you may still want to meet with a genetic counselor to answer your questions