What happens next when the Combined Screening Test is unable to be performed: Information for women and birthing people

You have attended Antenatal Clinic today for combined screening for Down's Syndrome, Edwards' Syndrome and Patau's Syndrome. This involves a dating scan, which includes a measurement from the back of your baby's neck and a blood sample that measures two pregnancy hormones.

Explanation

We have tried twice, as per national guidance (twice on the couch), but unfortunately we have not been able to measure the Nuchal Translucency (the pad of fluid at the back of your baby's neck). This may be due to the position of your baby, your body mass index is raised (meaning it is more difficult to obtain a reliable Nuchal Translucency measurement) or because your pregnancy is too far advanced for this particular test. As you have already consented for combined screening, which is now not possible, a further screening test called the quadruple test can be carried out after 14 weeks and 2 days of pregnancy but before 20 weeks of pregnancy. The optimum time to perform this screening is between 15 and 16 weeks of pregnancy.

Quadruple test

This screening test is a blood test only and measures four pregnancy hormones. This will provide you with a chance to find out if your baby may be affected by Down's syndrome but does NOT screen for Edwards' or Patau's Syndrome. For Edwards' syndrome and Patau's syndrome, if you are too far into your pregnancy to have the combined test, you'll be offered a 20-week screening scan. This looks for physical conditions, including Edwards' syndrome and Patau's syndrome; however, it is still a screening test and cannot exclude the syndromes.

The detection rate for the Quadruple test is 80% (4 out of every 5) as opposed to the combined test, which has an 85% (17 out of every 20 cases) detection rate.

Following today's scan, you will either have your blood taken in Antenatal Clinic (if you are between 14+2 and 20 weeks pregnant today), or we will rearrange an appointment to return for a blood test.

Further questions

If you have any further questions then please call the Antenatal Screening Team on **0776 885 0609** and/or refer to:

- Antenatal Resources and Choices National helpline Mon to Fri: 10am-5.30pm **0207 713 7486** (www.arc-uk.org)
- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fetal-anomaly-screening-programme-handbook/screening-for-downs-syndrome-edwards-syndrome-and-pataus-syndrome--3

Further information

There are other screening tests available privately with a better detection rate but at a cost. This test is called Non-Invasive Prenatal Testing (NIPT).

If you feel you need further information about any screening test, please refer to the ‘Screening tests for you and your baby’ information that was given to you at your initial booking appointment.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/screening-tests-for-you-and-your-baby

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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