

First Trimester or Second Trimester Screening

A Screening Test for Any Pregnant Woman



How does the test work?

There are two different tests that can be done depending on how many weeks pregnant you are. If you are only between 11-14 weeks pregnant, you can choose to have the First Trimester screening test done. This involves getting an ultrasound and having a blood test. If you are between 15 weeks and 22 weeks, then you can choose to have the Second Trimester screening test done. This involves only having a blood test.

What does the test look for?

The test cannot guarantee a baby is normal. It figures out what the chances are that the baby may have Down syndrome, trisomy 18 or spina bifida. It does not look for other birth defects. Results are reported as either "positive" or "negative."

What does it mean if the test is "negative"?

"Negative" means the baby probably does not have Down syndrome, trisomy 18 or spina bifida.

"Negative" means no extra testing is needed. "Negative" does not promise that the baby is normal.

What does it mean if the test is "positive"?

"Positive" means the baby might have Down syndrome, trisomy 18 or spina bifida. However, most babies with a "positive" result will be fine. "Positive" does not always mean that the baby has Down syndrome, trisomy 18 or spina bifida. It means other tests may need to be done. If the test is "positive," you will be sent to a specialist for more information about extra testing that is available.

What extra testing is available?

Extra testing might be an ultrasound or an amniocentesis. You will be sent to a specialist, such as a genetic counselor, for information about these tests if the test is "positive." It is always your choice whether or not to have any extra testing.

How much does the test cost?

It depends on whether you choose to have First Trimester or Second Trimester screening.

If you choose First Trimester screening you will need an ultrasound and a blood test. The ultrasound costs about \$400. The blood test costs about \$200. It is usually covered by medical insurance, medical coupons, Medicaid or medical cards.

If you choose to have Second Trimester screening you will only need to have a blood test. The blood test costs about \$300. This is also usually covered by medical insurance, medical coupons, Medicaid or medical cards.

If you have any questions talk to your doctor, pregnancy care provider, or a genetic counselor.

This fact sheet was originally developed by the Pacific Northwest Regional Genetics Group, which is no longer active, and was updated by the Western States Genetic Services Collaborative.

