



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Low PAPP-A result and extra scans

Information for women

Compassionate

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This is an invitation for growth scans later in your pregnancy. You are being invited for these scans because your screening result for Down's, Edward's and Patau's syndromes found a low level of PAPP-A. The schedule for additional checks is a nationally recommended one followed by this hospital.

What is PAPP-A?

Pregnancy associated plasma protein A (PAPP-A) is a hormone that is produced by the placenta (the 'afterbirth') in pregnancy. Your baby's placenta produces PAPP-A and you cannot influence the level of PAPP-A in your blood.

PAPP-A is one of the two hormones measured during the 12-week combined screening test.

Some studies have shown that low PAPP-A can sometimes be linked with babies who are 'smaller than expected' for their age. Because of this, national guidelines suggest that extra scans should be considered to check the growth of babies when a low PAPP-A level has been found.

If your blood tests suggest that your baby has an increased possibility of having Down's syndrome, Edwards syndrome or Patau's syndrome, one of the screening midwives should have contacted you before sending you this leaflet and will have given you further important information about these syndromes and options.

When will I have the growth scan?

You will have your routine scan around twenty weeks as usual and we will invite you to come to the Maternity Ultrasound Scan Department for some additional scans at the Royal Berkshire Hospital starting around 28 weeks of pregnancy for the next one.

As well as checking the baby's growth, the sonographer (person performing the ultrasound scan) will check the blood flow through the placenta (afterbirth) and the amniotic fluid (water) levels. After the ultrasound scan of your baby, you will come to Antenatal Clinic to discuss the findings. If your baby is growing at the normal healthy rate, and the fluid volume is normal, you will be invited for ultrasound scan appointments every 4 weeks (that is 32, 36 and 40 weeks) to continue to monitor your baby's growth. These show that your baby is healthy and growing at the normal rate, with normal blood flow in the cord, and a normal amount of amniotic fluid ('water' in the womb). You do not need to be seen by a doctor in a hospital clinic and, if all findings are normal, you can continue to see your midwife for all other routine check-ups.

If there are any concerns about your baby's growth or wellbeing, you may need more frequent scans and antenatal clinic appointments. We will offer these appointments to you as appropriate for your situation, and the appointments will be with a consultant obstetrician, who is fully trained in scanning. These are on the RBH site only.

Will my baby need to be born early, or by Caesarean birth?

A low PAPP-A result is not, by itself, a reason for anyone to be enquiring about an early delivery by induction of labour or Caesarean birth. For women whose babies are in the smaller than expected group requiring more frequent scans than four weekly, as these are only done by doctors, he or she will advise you directly if, in their opinion, waiting for labour to start naturally at full term (e.g. 40+ weeks) may not be the best option for your baby.

As the ultrasound is a clinical examination, we regret that older children are not allowed in the ultrasound room.

Is there anything I can do to help my baby grow well?

If you smoke, it is extremely important that you stop. Smoking can affect the placenta and your baby's growth. Your midwife can refer you for help to stop smoking or you can refer yourself to Smoke Free Life Berkshire **0800 622 6360** or **TEXT 66777**.

Useful numbers

If you wish to discuss this further prior to your appointment, please contact the screening midwives **0118 322 7292 / 8507**.

If you wish to change your appointment date or time, please call the appointments line **0118 322 8964**.

Further information

RCOG SGA guideline link

www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/guidelines/gtg_31.pdf

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

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

AN Screening MW, October 2008

Reviewed: May 2023, amended August 2023

Next review due: May 2025