

PAPP-A (Pregnancy associated plasma protein-A)

**Women's Health Services
Patient Information Leaflet**



You have been sent this leaflet because your recent combined screening test for Down's syndrome, Edwards and Patau's Syndrome has detected a low PAPP-A. This does not affect the result of the screening test that you have already been given.

What is PAPP-A and how is it detected?

PAPP-A (Pregnancy associated plasma protein-A) is a protein produced by the placenta. It is needed for the implantation process and to maintain a healthy placenta (afterbirth). PAPP-A is a marker measured as part of the combined pregnancy screening blood test which is offered around 11-14 weeks of pregnancy.

Why does PAPP-A matter in pregnancy?

Low levels of PAPP-A (0.415 MoM and below) are sometimes associated with:

- A lower birth weight baby
- Preterm birth
- Pre-eclampsia – high blood pressure (hypertension) and protein in your urine (proteinuria)
- Mid trimester miscarriage

If you receive news that you have low PAPP-A levels it only means that there is a small risk of the above. Please be assured that you will receive close surveillance with shared care between your midwife and obstetrician.

How is low PAPP-A managed?

If you are found to have low PAPP-A levels in your blood you will have already been contacted by a Screening Midwife and you will be offered a Uterine Artery Doppler scan at the time of your detailed scan. Extra ultrasound scans in the third trimester of your pregnancy will then be offered. The timings of these will depend on the result of your Uterine Artery Doppler scan.

Ultrasound scans will monitor your baby's wellbeing by taking measurements for growth, placental blood flow and the amount of amniotic fluid around your baby.

If there are any concerns around your baby's growth or wellbeing this will be referred to a consultant to discuss any further management and planning. If it is detected at less than 16 weeks it would be beneficial for you to commence aspirin (150mg at night) until the delivery of your baby.

What can I do to help?

If you smoke it is very important that you stop as it can affect placental function and your baby's growth. Please contact your community midwife who can refer you to smoking cessation or you can refer yourself direct through the smoking cessation helpline found on the internet.

Sources of information

If you have any queries or concerns please contact the Screening Midwife (01253 953639) or a member of your community midwifery team (01253 953622).

Receiving the news that you have low PAPP-A levels may cause anxiety but please be assured that the majority of babies will have normal growth.

For those babies that are found to be small you will have the reassurance of close monitoring with the midwifery team and obstetricians in our Maternity Unit.

References

NHS England (2016) Saving babies lives a care bundle for reducing stillbirth. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Saving-babies-lives-car-bundl.pdf> (information accessed 25 January 2019)

RCOG Green Top Guidelines No 31 The investigation and management of the small for gestational age fetus 2013

Other sources of information:



Hospital switchboard
Telephone: **01253 300000**

Patient Relations Department

The Patient Relations Department offer impartial advice and deal with any concerns or complaints the Trust receives.



You can contact them via tel: **01253 955589**
or by email: **bfwh.patientrelations@nhs.net**



You can also write to us at: Patient Relations Department, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Blackpool Victoria Hospital, Whinney Heys Road, Blackpool FY3 8NR



Further information is available on our website: **www.bfwh.nhs.uk**

If you'd like a large print, audio, Braille or a translated version of this booklet then please call: **01253 955520**



□ → □ → □ → **01253 955520**