

Prenatal Testing

Several laboratory tests are done to obtain information needed to monitor you and your developing baby's health. Listed below are a few of the most common tests used. Your OR provider may omit or add tests to these .depending on your pregnancy.

Prenatal Profile: Done on or soon after first OB visit.

- Blood tests:

- Blood type and Rh factor (+ or -).

- Rubella status to see **if** you are immune to the German measles.

- Hepatitis B virus test to see if you are a carrier of this liver-damaging virus that could be passed on to the baby.

- Hepatitis C if you have tattoos or piercings.

- Complete blood count (CBC) to see if you are low in iron (anemic). This test is usually repeated several times during the pregnancy.

- Pap Smear to test for cervical cancer.

- Urine screen to test for possible infection and how the kidneys are working.

- Syphilis test (VDRL, RPR) to determine if you have this infection. If so, prompt treatment is necessary.

- Gonorrhea and Chlamydia culture to detect an infection, necessitating prompt treatment,

- HIV test is recommended in order to detect if you have been infected.

- Other blood tests or cultures may be done depending on your provider.

Alpha-Fetoprotein (AFP): Done between the 15th and 20th week.

Testing for Alpha Fetoprotein (AFP) is done by drawing a blood sample from your arm. AFP is a protein normally produced by the fetus and present in the mother's blood during pregnancy. In some conditions, AFP levels can be too high or too low, indicating possible spinal or genetic defects. Screening the mother's blood for an elevation or lowering in the AFP levels can identify a problem and may require further testing. This is a screening test. Results may be outside the normal range and not necessarily mean there is a problem. Discuss this with your provider.

Triple Screen: Done between the 15th and 20th week.

This test helps your OB provider determine if your baby might have Down Syndrome or other problems. It includes the Alpha-Fetoprotein (AFP), a pregnancy hormone called human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG) and estrogen. This is a screening test, further testing may be needed.

Diabetic Screen: Done between the 24th and 29th week of pregnancy.

Pregnancy affects the way some women's bodies use sugar. It may result in a condition called "Gestational Diabetes." **if** untreated. this can put you and your baby at increased - risk. The Diabetic Screen is done to identify these women.

RH Negative:

A woman is either Rh+ or Rh-. If your blood is Rh-, and the father of the baby has Rh+ blood, there is a chance that the baby could have its father's Rh type of +. A small amount of the baby's blood could come in contact with your blood. If this occurs, your body doesn't recognize the + blood type and tries to fight against it by producing antibodies. To determine if this has occurred, a blood test is done between .26-28 weeks to see if you have developed any antibodies against your baby's blood. If this has not occurred, an injection of Rhogam is given to prevent this from happening. You will need Rhogam if you are Rh- and you:

- are between 26-28 weeks in the pregnancy.
- have a miscarriage or abortion.
- are within 72 hours of delivery and the baby is Rh+.
- have *an* amniocentesis.
- have a significant amount of vaginal bleeding during the pregnancy.

- have a fall, motor vehicle accident or abdominal trauma.

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Group B Streptococcus (GBS):

This type of bacteria is naturally found in the mouth, digestive, urinary, or reproductive tract of some men and women. This GBS bacteria "colonization" (a place where GBS is found) usually does not cause any danger to a woman's health, and is not contagious between adults. However, GBS bacteria can be passed from the pregnant mother to the baby during the birth process and can make the baby seriously ill. Pregnant women are usually tested for GBS bacteria between 35-37 weeks of pregnancy. A sample of mucus is taken and sent for evaluation during a pelvic exam. If the results are positive for GBS bacteria, your OB provider may suggest using antibiotics late in your pregnancy or during labor.

Ultrasound (Sonogram) Examination: Done usually between the 16th and 20th week. May be ordered at other times in your pregnancy if complications occur. Ultrasound uses high frequency sound waves that are transmitted onto a television screen. It is a non-invasive, painless method of scanning mother's abdomen to determine baby's growth and development, to detect fetal heart motion, to determine placental placement, and to examine the amount of fluid that surrounds the baby. An Ultrasound is a useful tool to evaluate how your pregnancy is progressing.

Ultrasound as a screening method during the course of pregnancy is useful as a baseline. Ultrasound as a screening method during the course of pregnancy is useful as a baseline in determination of overdue pregnancies and in diagnosing fetal growth variations, in planning repeat cesarean births, and in determining the cause of some bleeding during the pregnancy. Ultrasound is not used to determine the sex of the baby. To date there are no known risks and no fetal malformations which have been associated with the ultrasound.