

Iowa

**Maternal
Prenatal
Screening
Program**



Why Prenatal Screening?

Most pregnancies result in the birth of a healthy baby. Each pregnancy has a 3-5% risk for a birth defect or genetic condition. Some pregnancies may be at a higher risk due to reasons such as egg age or family history.

Prenatal screening tests tell you the chance your baby may have certain birth defects or genetic conditions. You can do prenatal screening even if these conditions are not in your family. Women or their partners with a family history of birth defects or genetic conditions may want to do diagnostic testing, such as chorionic villus sampling or amniocentesis, instead of screening. Talk to your health care provider about what test may be best for you.

Knowing that your baby is at risk can help you make plans to have your baby in a hospital that offers the special care you and your baby may need. Results can also guide decisions about more testing and prepare the family for the birth of a child with special needs. Some women use it to make decisions about continuing the pregnancy or adoption.

What does prenatal screening test for?

- Down Syndrome (Trisomy 21)*
- Trisomy 18*
- Open neural tube defects (openings in the spine or skull, such as spina bifida)
- Abdominal wall defects (openings in the belly, such as gastroschisis)

** The Iowa Maternal Prenatal Screening Program cannot perform this screening with twins or multiples gestations*

How can I get prenatal screening?

Your OB provider will order 1 or 2 blood tests:

1. A first trimester screen is a blood test between 10 weeks and 13 weeks plus 6 days of pregnancy. This test alone *does not* screen for open neural tube defects.
2. A quad screen is a blood test between 15 and 20 weeks 6 days of pregnancy.

If the results of these blood tests are done together, it is called Integrated Screening. Sometimes you can also get an ultrasound called a Nuchal Translucency.

Women with a positive result should not assume their baby has a birth defect or genetic condition. They should think about further evaluation and diagnostic testing.

Limits of screening

Results are not 100% accurate. This means some birth defects and genetic conditions may be missed. The Iowa Maternal Prenatal Screening Program will find:

- 79-85% of pregnancies with Down syndrome
- 80% of pregnancies with Trisomy 18
- 85% of pregnancies with open neural tube defects

No test can guarantee a healthy baby, but the Iowa Maternal Prenatal Screening Program offers tests that help you learn more about your baby's health.

What can the results show?

Most women get a “normal” or “screen negative” result. This means your baby has a low chance to have any condition that is part of the screening test.

If the result is “abnormal” or “screen positive,” this means there is a higher chance for certain birth defects or genetic conditions.

Most pregnancies with “screen positive” results turn out healthy. “Screen positive” means there is a high enough risk to think about more testing. The chance of a false positive result is 2-5%.

People need support and information when they get a “screen positive” result. A health care provider or genetic counselor can offer support and help you make decisions about more testing.

For more information contact:

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For more copies of this brochure, call: 319-335-4500