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Division of Women, Children & Sexual Health Services

How can I help to reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and that is why we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean helps to prevent infections from spreading.

Please would you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser at the entrance to every ward when you arrive and when you leave the ward. Sometimes hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

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CVS Chorionic Villus Sampling

Patient Information Leaflet

If you want to read this leaflet in another language please call the Antenatal Screening Co-ordinators

Safe & compassionate care,

every time

What is CVS?

Chorionic Villus Sampling (CVS) is a test you may need when you have been pregnant for at least 11+0 weeks.

A small sample of your placenta is taken. The placenta is something that grows in your womb to provide food and oxygen to your growing baby. The placenta has the same cells as your baby.

Why have this test?

For some women it is a little more likely that you will have a baby which has Down syndrome or another disorder. It can happen if your baby has an irregularity with their DNA, such as a chromosomal abnormality or genetic disorder. You may be offered a CVS test if your Doctor or Midwife think that this could affect you.

They may suggest having this test if:

- you have had a screening test (such as a nuchal scan) that has given a high risk result
- you have already had a baby with an abnormality or disorder
- we have tested you or your partner and found that your chromosomes are unusual
- you or your partner have a family history of a genetic disease, such as Muscular Dystrophy. Additional tests may be needed which can be arranged through the Genetics Department

It is your decision whether to have a CVS test or not.

Can the test detect defects other than Down syndrome?

Yes, Down syndrome is the most common problem found, but other less common disorders may be found.

We always want to improve the quality of information we give patients. If you have any comments or suggestions about this booklet, please contact:

Head of Midwifery
Division of Women, Children & Sexual Health Services
Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
Stoke Mandeville Hospital
Mandeville Road
Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire
HP21 8AL

Useful Contacts

Antenatal results and choices – 020 7631 0285
(www.arc-uk.org)

Down Syndrome Association – 0845 230 0372
(www.dsa-uk.com)

SOFT for Trisomy 13/18 & related disorders – 01221 3513122
(www.soft.org.uk)

Coming in for the test

You can have your usual breakfast before the test. Please bring your hand held maternity notes.

How is the test done?

You will be asked to sign a consent form. You will then have an ultrasound scan and a local anaesthetic to numb your skin. A fine needle will be inserted into your tummy to take the sample from the placenta. The test only lasts a few minutes.

Does it hurt?

Women usually describe the test as uncomfortable rather than painful. You may have slightly bruised skin where the needle is inserted.

What are the risks?

Miscarriages are quite common before 12 weeks of pregnancy whether the test is done or not.

Having the CVS test means that there is a very small additional possibility of miscarriage. This happens in about 1 case in 100.

When the test is carried out after 11 weeks it will not cause your baby to have any new problems. If the test is carried out before 11 weeks there is a small chance it may affect the baby's arms or legs.

What happens after the CVS?

We suggest that you stay in the clinic to rest for 15-20 minutes. Then you can go home. It is best not to drive yourself home after the test. We recommend you take things easy for 24 hours.

A member of staff will check your blood group. If you are rhesus negative it is recommended you have an injection of anti-D after your test. This will stop you from developing antibodies that may harm your baby.

It is not unusual to have some spots of blood coming from your vagina for a couple of days after the test. You may also feel a little bruised and have some period-like pains. These are usually nothing to worry about and go away after a day or two. You may use mild pain relief, for example paracetamol.

Serious complications are unusual, but you should look out for:

- bleeding from your vagina
- pains like a contraction that come and go regularly
- watery fluid coming from the vagina
- a raised temperature

If you have any of these symptoms either get medical advice from your GP or contact the Antenatal Screening Coordinators on 01296 316269 during office hours. After hours, contact A&E and say you need a gynaecological review.

Your results

If you had the CVS test done because your earlier Combined Screening or Quadruple test showed you were at higher risk of an abnormality, the result will usually be available in 48 working hours. That means if you have the test on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, you should hear later in the same week. But if you have it on a Thursday or Friday you will have to wait until early the next week. The test will tell you if your baby has either Down, Edwards or Patau syndromes.

If you had the CVS test because your ultrasound scan showed a structural abnormality in your baby, the result may take 2-3 weeks. This is because a quantitative PCR analysis and a microarray will need to be done. The microarray takes longer to do. It finds chromosomal imbalances which are too small to be seen by the usual chromosome blood tests. Please discuss with the doctor performing the test to find out more details about what this means.

The Screening Co-ordinator will telephone you with the result. If the result is normal, your notes will be updated at your next

hospital visit. If the result is not normal, we will arrange an urgent appointment to talk to you about the effects on the baby and what choices you have.

If the test is offered because of a genetic condition other than Down syndrome, the results might take longer and the local Genetic Counsellor will contact you.

For genetic tests we will ask you how you wish to be told the result and we will also tell your family doctor (GP) and Obstetrician of the results.

Is the test reliable?

In about 1 case in 100, we will suggest you have further tests. This is when there may be a difference in the chromosomes in your placenta and in your baby.

The CVS test is sometimes used to look for other genetic disorders. In these cases the accuracy may be different. Your Genetic Counsellor or Obstetrician will be able to tell you.

Any questions

We will ensure you have time to ask questions and discuss the test fully before we begin it.

If you want further information please do not hesitate to contact:

Antenatal Screening Co-ordinators on 01296 316269
(Stoke Mandeville Hospital)
or 01494 425230
(Wycombe Hospital)

or visit the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) website for patient information leaflets on CVS.

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/patient-leaflets/amniocentesis-and-chorionic-villus-sampling/>