

Checking Your Baby's Blood Supply (Uterine Artery Doppler ultrasound measurement)

What is a uterine artery Doppler ultrasound measurement?

Uterine arteries carry blood to your uterus (womb). A uterine artery Doppler ultrasound measurement is used to check the blood flow between you and your baby. It is carried out during an ultrasound scan. The Doppler measurements uses sound waves to check if the blood is flowing easily (low resistance) or whether it is having to work harder to flow (raised resistance).

When does the measurement take place?

If you are pregnant with one baby, this measurement is taken during the second scan you are offered during your pregnancy, at approximately 20 weeks, usually referred to as your anomaly scan. If you have are pregnant with more than one baby, you will be scheduled for additional scans where we will check your babies are growing.

What do the results mean?

A low resistance measurement means that a good, steady amount of blood is reaching your baby, helping it continue to grow well. It also indicates a lower chance of you developing pre-eclampsia (a problem with high blood pressure) during pregnancy.

4 in 100 people will show a raised resistance in the blood flow. This may indicate that there is a higher chance that your baby may not grow as well as expected or that you may develop pre-eclampsia in pregnancy.

What if I have a scan that shows raised resistance?

The fact that there is a raised resistance does not mean that you will develop pre-eclampsia or your baby will have slow growth, only that it is more likely; 1 in 4 people who have a raised resistance go on to develop one of these conditions. To be safe, if you have a raised resistance on scan, we will recommend closer monitoring, which will mean more regular blood pressure checks and extra scans. Your sonographer will refer you for an antenatal clinic appointment at 28 weeks to discuss this. This means that if problems start to occur, they can be picked up as early as possible and we can discuss any recommended actions for you and your baby.

If you have any further questions, please speak to your Midwife.

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible, but please note that it is subject to change. Please therefore always check specific advice on any concerns you may have with your doctor.

How can you help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection prevention and control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection prevention and control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. Please follow our infection prevention and control guidelines when visiting our healthcare sites. Further information is available on our website.

Patient Advice Sheet

If you would like a copy of this information on audiotape, in large print or translated, please call the Patient Advice Liaison Service on 01296 316042 or email bht.pals@nhs.net