

Amniocentesis test: yes or no?

Use this decision aid to help you, your partner, and your healthcare professional decide whether or not to have amniocentesis testing. An amniocentesis test tells you whether your baby has a chromosome-related problem, such as Down syndrome. The amniocentesis test is optional. This decision aid is for women in their fifteenth week of pregnancy or later.

Frequently Asked Questions ↓	Having amniocentesis	Not having amniocentesis
What happens during an amniocentesis test?	The test takes place around week 15 of pregnancy. A doctor uses a needle to remove a small amount of amniotic fluid that surrounds the baby. The fluid is then tested for chromosome problems. Some women have cramps during and after the test, but can go back to normal activities the next day.	Does not apply
Will we find out for sure if our baby has Down syndrome or another chromosome problem?	Yes. Amniocentesis is very accurate. A positive test result means that it is very likely that your baby has Down syndrome or another chromosome problem, such as Edward's or Patau's syndromes. If you have a normal result, your baby most likely does not have a chromosome problem. However, not all chromosome problems can be detected by the amniocentesis test.	No. If you have a mid-pregnancy ultrasound scan, it can show problems with the baby's physical development. You would need more tests to confirm any problem.
Are there any risks to the baby?	Amniocentesis causes less than 1 in every 100 women (less than 1%) to miscarry. This risk is in addition to the usual small risk of miscarriage for women at this point in pregnancy. A serious infection happens in about 1 in 1000 women (0.1%) who have amniocentesis.	No. There is still the usual small risk of miscarriage for all women at this point in pregnancy.
If a problem is found, what does it mean for us?	You will have to decide whether to continue or end the pregnancy. You will be supported to make this difficult decision. If you definitely would not want to end your pregnancy, think carefully about the extra risks you take by having an amniocentesis test.	Does not apply
What are women told after an amniocentesis?	1) Most women will be told that their baby does not have Down syndrome. 2) A small number of women will be told that their baby has Down syndrome. 3) An even smaller number of women will be told that their baby does not have Down syndrome, but does have another chromosome problem.	Does not apply
Are there other tests?	Does not apply	A chorionic villus sampling (CVS) invasive test can be done earlier, at 10-14 weeks. It has a slightly higher miscarriage rate than amniocentesis. Non Invasive Prenatal Testing is a blood test that can be done as early as the 10th week of pregnancy. It is more accurate than other screening tests. If a problem is found, you will be offered amniocentesis to confirm the result.

Editors: Marie-Anne Durand (Lead Editor), Benjamin Dropkin, Peter Alf Collins, Bryan Beattie, Glyn Elwyn
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