

Down syndrome screening test: yes or no?

Use this decision aid to help you, your partner, and your healthcare professional decide whether or not to screen your baby for Down syndrome. Down syndrome is a chromosomal condition that causes learning difficulties and developmental problems. This decision aid is for women between 9 and 22 weeks of pregnancy.

Frequently Asked Questions ↓	Having screening	Not having screening
Which screening tests will be offered?	<p>There are many screening tests that can be done at different times in your pregnancy. You may be offered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A combined screening test (blood test and ultrasound scan), usually done between 11 and 14 weeks of pregnancy. • A maternal blood test, such as the quad screen, done between 15 and 21 weeks. • A non-invasive prenatal blood test (NIPT), done as early as the 10th week of pregnancy. 	<p>No blood screening tests are offered. You can have a routine mid-pregnancy ultrasound scan between 18 and 21 weeks of pregnancy.</p>
What will the tests tell us?	<p>All of the tests will tell you your chances of having a baby with Down syndrome.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your test says you have a 'higher chance' of having a baby with Down syndrome, you will be offered a diagnostic test (amniocentesis or chorionic villus sampling) to confirm the results. • If you have a 'lower chance' result, it doesn't mean that you have no chance at all of having a baby with Down syndrome. It just means the chance is small. 	<p>You will not know what your individual chance is of having a baby with Down syndrome.</p>
Will we find out for sure if our baby has Down syndrome?	<p>No. Screening tests can't tell you for sure if your baby has Down syndrome. Diagnostic tests can tell you if your baby has Down syndrome or another chromosome condition.</p>	<p>No. A mid-pregnancy ultrasound scan can tell you if the baby has physical problems, but it can't tell you for sure about Down syndrome.</p>
What if the screening results show a high chance of having a baby with Down syndrome?	<p>You can choose to have a diagnostic test to find out for sure if your baby has Down syndrome. Diagnostic tests have a small risk of miscarriage. Genetic counselors can talk with you about the test and help you make a decision.</p>	<p>Does not apply</p>
What if the diagnostic test shows a problem?	<p>You will have to decide whether your preference is to continue or to end the pregnancy. You will be supported in making this decision. You can learn more about Down syndrome by talking to your doctor or genetic counselor.</p>	<p>Does not apply</p>
Are there risks to the pregnancy?	<p>No. There are no risks to your pregnancy with any of the screening tests. If you choose to have a diagnostic test based on your screening test results, there is a small risk of miscarriage.</p>	<p>No. If you choose to only have a mid-pregnancy ultrasound scan, there is no risk to your pregnancy. However, if your doctor thinks that there may be a problem, they may offer you a diagnostic test.</p>
How likely are we to get a lower- or higher-chance result?	<p>This depends on your age. In general, at least 950 out of every 1000 women (95%) will have a lower-chance test result. Less than 50 out of every 1000 women (5%) will have a higher-chance test result.</p>	<p>You will not know your individual chance of having a baby with Down syndrome. In general, Down syndrome occurs in nearly 2 out of every 1000 live births (0.2%).</p>

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