

Prenatal Testing

Several routine tests and screenings are offered throughout pregnancy. They are one way of monitoring you and your baby's health. They can help us make decisions about your care.

Initial Blood Work

Blood Type, Rh Factor and Antibody Screen

This test determines your blood type. If parents each have different blood types, the baby may not have the same blood type as he mother. It is also important to know if the mother is Rh-positive or negative. The majority of people are Rh-positive which means they carry the Rh factor on the red blood cells. It is possible for mom to have Rh-negative blood and baby to be Rh-positive. Rh-negative women receive a RhoGAM injection at 28 weeks. This injection will be given again after birth if the baby is Rh-positive.

Complete Blood Count

This test checks for anemia, which refers to low blood count or low hemoglobin (low iron). The test also looks at your platelet count, a component of blood important in blood clotting. We typically perform a CBC or hemoglobin test twice during pregnancy.

Hepatitis B

This is a routine test that checks for the hepatitis B virus. You can have the hepatitis B virus without having symptoms. If you are a carrier of this liver-damaging virus, you could pass it to your baby. Your doctor will talk about ways to minimize this risk.

HIV

We check for the antibodies of the virus that causes AIDS. We recommend all pregnant women receive this test. Medication is now available to reduce the risk of passing the infection to baby, as well as slowing the progression of the virus in you.

Rubella (German measles)

We check your immunity to German measles. Most women have immunity. If you are found to be non-immune, you should avoid anyone who has the illness. We also recommend you get a vaccine soon after you deliver so you would not be at a risk for German measles in the future.

Syphilis

It is important that you get treatment to protect yourself and your baby from serious complications due to this sexually transmitted infection.

Initial Physical Exam

Genital Cultures

These tests look for infections that could increase your pregnancy risks and should be treated. Examples include chlamydia and gonorrhea.

Pap Smear

This test screens for cervical cancer. It may detect some infections.

Lab Tests between 15-20 Weeks

Maternal Serum Screening (MSS)

This blood test also is called the triple screen or quad screen. We offer this test to identify pregnancy women with an increased risk for having a baby with a neural tube defect (abnormal development of the brain and spinal cord) or Down syndrome. In addition, it also may identify women who have an increased chance of having a baby with trisomy 18. Babies with these disorders are usually born into families with no prior history of the problem.

Lab Tests between 24-28 Weeks

One-hour Glucose Challenge Test (GCT)

This test screens for your risk of developing gestational diabetes (GDM), a condition developed in about 3-5 percent of pregnancies. We may provide this test during the first trimester if you are at high risk of developing GDM. We will give you a sugary drink and then, exactly one hour later, draw blood to test your blood sugar level. A high blood sugar level indicates you are at risk of GDM. If you have a positive test, we recommend a confirmatory three-hour glucose tolerance test (GTT).

Lab Tests between 35-37 Weeks

Group B Streptococcus (GBS)

This bacteria is found naturally in the digestive, urinary or reproductive tract in up to 30 percent of women. Women can pass the bacteria to baby during labor and birth. Only 1 percent of these babies actually develop the illness. If they do, it can be serious. Many providers routinely test pregnant

women for the bacteria. Antibiotic treatment during labor is recommended for those who carry GBS.

Ultrasound

Level 1 Ultrasound

A level 1 ultrasound is often recommended around 20 weeks into your pregnancy. Your provider will discuss this ultrasound with you. Your provider may recommend more ultrasounds based on your situation. An ultrasound allows the provider to see the baby in your uterus.

Ultrasounds can help:

- Confirm due dates
- Evaluate baby growth and development
- Confirm the number of babies
- Check the location of the placenta
- Check the amount of clear liquid that surrounds and protects the baby (amniotic fluid)

We perform an ultrasound by placing a transducer on your abdomen. A transducer is a hand-held device that sends high frequency sound waves through the body. The sound waves echo off body structures. A computer then converts the echoes into visual images. Sometimes it is necessary to have a transvaginal ultrasound (especially in early pregnancy).