

2007
Edition



A guide to routine blood tests offered during pregnancy

Blood tests you are recommended to have during your pregnancy

As an important part of your care during pregnancy there are a number of blood tests offered. These tests are performed to help protect your health and the health of your baby. The tests can all usually be done from one blood sample at one of your first antenatal visits. The blood sample taken is put into several tubes for the different tests.

This leaflet gives some information on these routine tests. Take time to read this information. You may wish to discuss it with your partner. Note any questions you have and when you attend the clinic/hospital you can discuss these with your midwife, GP or other healthcare staff. Your decision on whether to accept these tests will not affect the quality of your care being delivered by healthcare professionals. However, if some results are absent it may affect decisions made about the care of your baby before and after delivery.

The test results are confidential and **only** healthcare professionals **closely** involved in your care will be informed of your results. No-one will be told about your results without your consent.

All these tests will be carried out unless you request otherwise and you will be asked to sign a consent form.



Full blood count

This measures your haemoglobin, which is a way of assessing the level of iron in your blood. If that is low it indicates you could be anaemic and you may be offered iron tablets or other appropriate treatments. If any other problems are identified further tests will be carried out if required.

Blood group

This test tells us several things about your blood. Firstly it shows which main blood group you belong to (A, B, O or AB). It also shows whether there are any blood group antibodies in your blood. This could be a result of a previous transfusion or pregnancy, for example.

Another finding is whether you belong to the Rhesus positive or Rhesus negative group.

If you are Rhesus positive

No further action is necessary.

If you are Rhesus negative

You are likely to require injections of a treatment called 'anti-D' and these are routinely offered at 28 and 34 weeks.

This helps prevent a serious illness for future babies you may have, which was common before this form of treatment was available. One in six women are found to be Rhesus negative.

Rubella (German measles)

Rubella infection in the first 20 weeks of pregnancy can be harmful to your baby and may affect development, leading to deafness for example.

Most women are now protected from rubella infection having been immunised in childhood. If you have a satisfactory level of immunity, you and your baby should be protected if you come into contact with someone who has rubella during your pregnancy.

However, if the test shows you are not immune or have low levels of immunity, you will be given health advice and offered immunisation **after** delivery. Rubella is a mild illness generally and is easy to confuse with other rashes in children and adults. If you come into contact with someone with a rash or develop a rash yourself during pregnancy, you should contact your doctor or midwife promptly.

Syphilis

This infection acquired through sex is now fairly uncommon, but we test for it because without treatment syphilis can damage your health and that of your baby by causing developmental difficulties. If the test result is positive we can offer effective treatment and prevent the infection affecting your baby by prescribing a course of antibiotics.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B infection can be passed on from mother to baby during birth. It is a virus which affects the liver. It can be carried in the blood for many years before causing any signs of illness. Without a test, you may not know if you are infected. If the hepatitis B test is positive, specialist help will be provided for you and your baby.

An immunisation programme started at birth can usually prevent infection in babies born to infected mothers enabling them to have a healthy life. Without immunisation, many babies born to mothers who are hepatitis B carriers become infected.

These babies are at risk of developing serious liver disease as they grow older.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome).

Infected pregnant women can pass HIV to their babies during pregnancy, childbirth and also through breastfeeding. HIV attacks the immune system and destroys the body's defences against infection and disease. It can take years for HIV to do enough damage for someone to become ill and many will be unaware that they are infected unless they have a test.

If your HIV result is positive, advice and treatment under the guidance of specialists will be offered. This will include giving you medication against the virus to treat your infection and greatly reduce the chance of infection passing to your baby. You will also be given advice about the best type of delivery and method of feeding your baby.

Results of routine blood tests

You will be informed of the results of these routine tests at your next clinic visit. From time to time technical problems can occur with the blood tests and a repeat sample may be requested. If any problem is found, or there is something you should know, you will be contacted as soon as possible. Some of these tests are routinely repeated later in pregnancy.

Having a test in itself has no implications for current or future life insurance policies. However, any positive result for infection may need to be declared on insurance health questionnaires and could have insurance implications. You may wish to check your own policy for further details.

Identifying infections during pregnancy not only protects the health of you and your baby, but advice offered can protect the health of others including your family.

All tests will be carried out unless you request otherwise.



If you have any questions or if you are concerned about any of these tests, please ask at your next clinic visit or contact your midwife. These tests can be postponed if you wish more time to consider the implications. All of these tests are recommended by your midwife, consultant obstetrician, GP and all healthcare professionals involved in helping you have a healthy pregnancy and baby.

When agreeing to have the blood tests you should be aware that:

- we keep a record of any test results as they may be needed in the future. This information will include a number of personal details such as your name, address and date of birth
- all healthcare professionals have a legal duty to keep all personal information confidential and everyone who receives information from us is also legally obliged to keep it confidential
- information gathered from these blood tests may be used for research or audit in order to improve our knowledge about these infections, and also to improve our service. Information used for these purposes will be made anonymous. For research which requires personal information, your consent would be sought beforehand
- all information that is collected is stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998)
- if you would prefer this information not to be included in your hand-held record please inform you midwife.

If you would like to know more about the information being kept, please ask to see the person in charge of your care who will be able to answer your questions. Alternatively the Data Protection Officer for the NHS Board responsible for your care will be able to answer questions. Please ask a member of staff if you would like to contact him or her.

For general health care information you can contact NHS helpline on Freephone 0800 22 44 88 or if it is an emergency NHS 24: 08454 24 24 24.

ENGLISH

More information is available in other languages and formats at:

<http://www.healthscotland.com/publications>

If you do not have web access or need help to do this, contact your local NHS Board or phone the free NHS Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 (Textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88).

বাংলা

<http://www.healthscotland.com/publications> তে অন্যান্য ভাষা এবং অর্ধাংশ আকারে তথ্য পাওয়া যায়।

আপনার কাছে এসেছে যেখানে কূটনৈতিকভাবে বা অন্যভাবে কিংবা যাদের সহায়তায় প্রয়োজন হলে 0800 22 44 88 (টেক্সটফোন 18001 0800 22 44 88)তে বিনামূল্যে NHS Helpline (এনএইচএস হেল্পলাইন) থেকে কল লিখুন। আপনার স্থানীয় NHS Board (এনএইচএস বোর্ড) যোগাযোগ করুন।

中文

想得到更多关于该信息的不同语言或者格式的版本,请访问以下网址:

<http://www.healthscotland.com/publications>

如果你不能浏览互联网或者需要别人帮助你浏览互联网,请联系你本地的NHS(全民健康服务),或者NHS帮助热线是0800 22 44 88(文本电话: 18001 0800 22 44 88)。

FRANÇAIS

Pour obtenir de plus amples informations en d'autres langues et formats veuillez cliquer sur le lien suivant: <http://www.healthscotland.com/publications>

Si vous n'avez pas accès à Internet ou avez besoin d'aide pour le faire, contactez votre agence locale NHS Board ou contactez le numéro gratuit du NHS Helpline au 0800 22 44 88 (Textophone 18001 0800 22 44 88).

LIETUVIŠKAI

Tolimesnę informaciją galima rasti kitomis kalbomis ir kitose formuose, adresu: <http://www.healthscotland.com/publications>

Jei neturite prieigimo prie interneto, arba jeigu jums reikalinga pagalba, susisiekite su savo vietine Sveikatos Apsaugos Taryba (NHS Board), arba skambinkite nemokamam NHS pagalbos telefonui: 0800 22 44 88 (Tekstofonas: 18001 0800 22 44 88).

हिन्दी HINDI

अन्य भाषाओं और फॉर्मेट्स में अधिक जानकारी निम्नलिखित पते पर उपलब्ध है

<http://www.healthscotland.com/publications>

यदि आपके पास वेब एक्सेस नहीं है अथवा इसे करने के लिए मदद की जरूरत है, तो अपने स्थानीय NHS Board (एनएसबी बोर्ड) से संपर्क करें अथवा 0800 22 44 88 (टैक्सटफोन 18001 0800 22 44 88) पर नि:शुल्क NHS Helpline (एनएसबी हेल्पलाइन) को फोन करें.

POLSKI POLISH

Więcej informacji w innych językach i formatach znajduje Państwo na stronie

Internetowej <http://www.healthscotland.com/publications>

Jeżeli nie mają Państwo dostępu do Internetu lub potrzebują pomocy w znalezieniu informacji prosimy kontaktować się z lokalną siedzibą Narodowego Funduszu Zdrowia (NHS Board) lub telefonować pod bezpłatną infolinię NHS pod numer 0800 22 44 88 (numer telefonu testowego 18001 0800 22 44 88).

Русский RUSSIAN

Дополнительная информация доступна на других языках и в другом

формате на: <http://www.healthscotland.com/publications>

Если вы не можете открыть веб-страницу или вам нужна помощь, обратитесь в местное Бюро НСЗ (NHS Board) или бесплатно позвоните в Службу Помощи НСЗ (NHS) по телефону 0800 22 44 88 (Текстофон 18001 0800 22 44 88).

ESPAÑOL SPANISH

Mayores informes se encuentran disponibles en otros lenguajes e idiomas en

<http://www.healthscotland.com/publications>

Si no cuenta con acceso a internet o requiere ayuda para la consulta, contacte su NHS Board local marcando al conmutador, o marque gratis a la línea NHS Helpline al 0800 22 44 88 (Para textos telefónicos al 18001 0800 22 44 88).

URDU اردو

مزید تفصیلات کے لیے دیگر زبانوں اور شکلوں میں مزید معلومات دستیاب ہیں

<http://www.healthscotland.com/publications>

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Further information on all these tests is available from your midwife, other hospital Staff or GP.

You can also obtain additional information from:

Positively Women

Tel: 020 7713 0222

www.positivelywomen.org.uk

Waverley Care

Tel: 0131 661 0982

www.waverleycare.org

The Sandyford Initiative

Tel: 0141 211 8130

email: helpsandyford@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

www.sandyford.org

FPA Scotland (Family Planning Association)

Tel: 0141 576 5088

www.fpa.org.uk

Details of organisations and websites are included for your information. Inclusion in, or exclusion from this information leaflet does not imply the endorsement or otherwise of an organisation by the Scottish Government Health Department.

Your local contact details:

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