

Information for patients and carers

Low Pregnancy Associated Plasma Protein-A (PAPP-A)

Decorative blue wavy lines at the bottom of the page, consisting of three overlapping bands of different shades of blue.

Your recent blood test has shown that one of the hormones (PAPP-A) measured in your Combined Screening test is lower than expected. This finding does not affect the result of the screening test for Down's, Edwards and Patau's syndromes that you have been given.

What is PAPP-A?

Pregnancy Associated Plasma Protein-A (PAPP-A) is a hormone that is made by the placenta (afterbirth) in pregnancy. It is measured as part of the combined screening test.

What does low PAPP-A mean?

Most babies born to women with a low PAPP-A will have a normal weight at birth and be born at the expected time. Low PAPP-A isn't uncommon even though you may not have heard of it before.

However, lower levels (less than 0.415MoM) of PAPP-A in pregnancy may be associated with:

- Lower birthweight babies
- An increased chance of developing pre-eclampsia (a blood pressure condition)
- An increased chance of giving birth before 37 weeks of pregnancy (preterm birth)

What does this mean for you and your baby?

We will offer you extra scans to monitor the growth of your baby. Your scan will be reviewed at each appointment and the results of the scan discussed with you. We will send appointments for these scans at 32, 35 and 38 weeks of your pregnancy.

We will also offer you a uterine artery doppler measurement during your anatomy scan (around 20 weeks). Uterine arteries are the vessels that carry blood to your womb (uterus). These arteries supply the blood flow to the womb which then feed the placenta. If there is a good blood flow in these arteries, the placenta develops normally helping the baby to grow in a healthy way inside the womb. A doppler ultrasound measurement is used to check the pattern of the blood flow in the uterine arteries. The doppler measurement checks if the blood is flowing easily (low resistance) or whether it is having to work harder to flow (raised resistance). A low resistance flow means that a good/steady amount of blood is reaching your baby, helping it to continue to grow well. It also reduces the chances of you developing pre-eclampsia.

Sometimes the measurement will show a raised resistance. This suggests that there is more chance of your baby not growing as well as expected, or of you developing pre-eclampsia. It is important to understand that this does not mean that this will happen, only that it is more likely. If your measurements show a raised resistance, we will offer you additional monitoring and earlier scans. This means that if any issues do arise, they can be picked up as early as possible.

What can I do to help my baby grow well?

In line with national guidelines, we would recommend that you take low dose aspirin daily, if you are not already doing so. The recommended dosage is 150mg to be taken every evening until 36 weeks of pregnancy.

Aspirin is generally safe to take in pregnancy and does not appear to have any short or long term effects on the baby. Studies have shown that it does not increase the risk of bleeding for people at delivery. Aspirin should be avoided in people who are severely asthmatic, allergic to aspirin or who have long term bleeding or platelet disorders.

A prescription has been completed and will be available for you to collect from Sharoe Green Unit reception. Alternatively, you can purchase this over the counter at your local pharmacy. It is important

that you keep all your routine community midwife appointments, so that the health and wellbeing of you and your baby can be monitored throughout the pregnancy.

Monitoring your baby's movements is a good way to check on your baby's wellbeing. If your baby's movements concern you, slow down or stop you must contact the maternity unit immediately.

If you currently smoke, we recommend that you stop smoking as smoking can affect the placenta and the growth of the baby. Ask your midwife for a referral to our smoking cessation team who can provide you with help and support, including the offer of nicotine replacement therapies.

Contact details

Triage is available 24/7 on telephone no: **01772 524495**.

Should you require further advice or information relating to screening or PAPP, please telephone the Antenatal and Newborn Screening Team on **01772 524693** (Monday – Friday).

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

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www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**

Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.

This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

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