

Low PAPP-A

What is PAPP-A?

PAPP-A stands for Pregnancy Associated Plasma Protein A, this is a protein produced by the placenta (afterbirth) and is measurable in a mother's bloodstream. Your PAPP-A has been measured in the combined first trimester screening to help calculate the chance of your baby having Downs, Edwards or Patau syndrome.

Why is PAPP-A important?

In most cases, PAPP-A does not have an impact on your pregnancy, but there is research to suggest that a lower level of PAPP-A (less than 0.41 MoM) may be associated with:

- A lower birth-weight baby due to the placenta not working as well.
- An increased chance of developing pre-eclampsia.
- An early birth.

What does this mean for my pregnancy?

To help try and prevent some of these problems developing, it is recommended that you take aspirin (150mg daily, with your evening meal) from 12 weeks (or as soon as possible, if result found after 12 weeks) until 36 weeks.

From 26-28 weeks, at each visit your midwife will routinely measure the height of your uterus and record it on your customised growth chart. She will also check your blood pressure and your urine sample for signs of protein (this may indicate pre-eclampsia developing).

You will also be offered extra scans to check on the growth of your baby. If the measurements by your midwife suggest your baby may be small, further scans may be arranged.

If your baby is found to be smaller than expected, you will have an appointment in a consultant antenatal clinic to discuss the results and make a plan individualised to your needs.

If the scan shows that your baby is growing well, you will be offered a 'stretch & sweep' at 39 weeks, and an induction of labour close to your due date. Your midwife will be able to explain these procedures to you later in your pregnancy.

Is there anything I can do to help prevent problems?

It is well known that smoking can negatively affect baby's growth and placental function, and we encourage all women to stop smoking in pregnancy. We have a dedicated smoking cessation service available and your Community Midwife can refer you if you would like help to quit smoking.

Maintaining a healthy weight and gentle exercise is encouraged in women who are found to have low PAPP-A, as it is in all pregnancies.

Who can I speak to if I need further information?

Receiving news that you have a low PAPP-A can cause anxiety, but please be reassured that in most cases, no problems develop.

Please speak with your Community Midwife if you have further questions. You may also contact the Fetal Maternal Assessment Unit (FMAU) Midwives on 01392 406540, if you have further questions.

The Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists has information available which can be found here :

- www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/patients/patient-information-leaflets/pregnancy/pi-having-a-small-baby.pdf
- www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/patients/patient-information-leaflets/pregnancy/pi-pre-eclampsia.pdf
- www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/patients/patient-information-leaflets/pregnancy/pi-smoking-and-pregnancy-2.pdf

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

© Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust

Designed by Graphics (Print & Design), RD&E