

# Nuchal Translucency (NT) of 3.5mm or more on Ultrasound Scan

An information guide



# **Nuchal Translucency (NT) of 3.5mm or more on Ultrasound Scan - Information for parents**

## **What is Nuchal Translucency?**

**Nuchal translucency** is a collection of fluid under the skin at the back of your baby's neck.

It is part of the baby's normal development in the womb in early pregnancy. The amount of fluid is measured during a **nuchal translucency (NT)** ultrasound scan.

If your baby has more fluid than usual it can be an indication of a possible health problem.

You have been given this information sheet because the nuchal translucency (NT) of your baby has been found to be 3.5mm or more. This is known as an increased or raised NT.

A raised NT does not mean there is definitely a problem.

## **Implications of Raised NT**

Studies have shown that an increased NT is associated with:

- Chromosome problems – the 3 most common problems are Down's syndrome, Edward's syndrome & Patau's syndrome, but there are other chromosomes which can be affected.
- Genetic syndromes
- Congenital heart abnormalities
- Increased risk of miscarriage.

Increased NT is associated with a group of conditions and there may not be a single cause for the fluid increase.

Exclusion of problems in baby is a staged process.

However, it is important to remember that many babies with increased NT at an early scan can be born healthy and well.

## **Why do you measure NT?**

All pregnant women in England are offered a screening test to give them information on the chance of their baby having Down's, Edward's and Patau syndrome.

We measure NT as part of the 'combined' screening test for all three of these syndromes.

You may have chosen not to have your baby screened for these syndromes. However, because a raised NT is also linked with physical problems and other chromosomal conditions, the sonographer will tell you if the NT measures 3.5mm or more.

## What happens now I know that my baby has a raised NT?

At your appointment with a health professional, you will be counselled regarding your options. You may not want to do anything, or you may want to have more tests to know if your baby has a chromosome problem.

There are 2 tests which can be offered to check your baby's chromosomes:

- A chorionic villus sampling (CVS)
- An amniocentesis

Both of these tests are done by a specialist doctor in fetal medicine. They are **diagnostic** tests which means they will tell you for sure if your baby has a chromosomal problem.

They are also invasive tests which means they involve passing a fine needle through your lower abdomen (tummy) while having a scan.

- **Chorionic villus sampling (CVS)** – is usually carried out between the 11th and 14th weeks of pregnancy. The needle is used to collect some cells from the placenta (afterbirth). This test is available at St Mary's Hospital, in Manchester.
- **Amniocentesis** - is usually carried out from the 15th week of pregnancy. The needle is used to collect a small sample of amniotic fluid (the fluid that surrounds the baby in the womb). This test is available at the Royal Oldham Hospital.

There are risks associated with both procedures, including miscarriage (1:200 chance, or 0.5%).

**Please see the amniocentesis and CVS leaflets for more information.**

Although this can be worrying, it is important to remember that an increased NT does not always mean there is always a health problem.

It will be up to you whether or not to have any more tests. If the tests show there is a problem with your baby, you will be supported to make the choice that is right for you and your family.

### **Further appointments**

You will be offered appointments for further scans with a consultant in Pennine Fetal Unit (PFU) regardless of your decision to have the CVS or amniocentesis.

- 16 weeks - This is to perform an early anomaly scan as this can detect some of the associated structural problems at an earlier stage and may help you in planning the pregnancy.
- 20 weeks - For a detailed anomaly scan plus a fetal echo (specialist heart scan) to look closely at the baby's heart.

A referral will be made to the Pennine Fetal Unit (PFU).

You will receive a phone call from the PFU team at the Royal Oldham Hospital to discuss the timing of these appointments.

## **Where can I get more information?**

If you have any questions while you are waiting for your appointment, please visit the following websites or call the number below:

### **CVS and Amniocentesis Leaflet**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/865044/](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/865044/Chorionic_villus_sampling_and_amniocentesis_information_for_parents.pdf)

[Chorionic\\_villus\\_sampling\\_and\\_amniocentesis\\_information\\_for\\_parents.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/865044/Chorionic_villus_sampling_and_amniocentesis_information_for_parents.pdf)

### **ARC – Antenatal results and choices**

[www.arc-uk.org](http://www.arc-uk.org)

<https://www.arc-uk.org/tests-explained/ultrasound-scans>

### **Pennine Fetal Unit Midwives**

Telephone: **0161 778 5183**

At a time like this it is natural to want as much information as possible.

Many people choose to look at information on the internet, but please remember that some websites contain information that is not accurate.



**If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service**

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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**For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897**

**For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service**

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The NCA brings together Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and the hospitals and community services of The Royal Oldham Hospital, Fairfield General Hospital in Bury, and Rochdale Infirmary (currently part of The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust).

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