

# Nuchal Translucency Scan 12-13 Weeks

All pregnant women are generally offered an ultrasound scan at **12 weeks** to check the development of the pregnancy.

At this time we can:

- Assess fetal heart activity and confirm due dates
- Check for multiple pregnancy
- Screen for Down syndrome and other chromosomal abnormalities
- Detect some major structural problems
- Screen for pre-eclampsia (high blood pressure that typically develops later in the pregnancy)



## Combined First Trimester Screening

Screening tests aim to identify a small group of pregnancies at higher risk of having Down syndrome or other chromosomal abnormalities. The combined first trimester screening test involves an ultrasound scan and a blood test. Your blood test can be performed any time after 10 weeks, however it must be taken at least 5-7 days prior to your ultrasound appointment to ensure that all results are available to us at the time of your scan.

The ultrasound examines the fluid-filled space at the back of the baby's neck, called the Nuchal Translucency (NT), and the development of the baby's nasal bone (NB). The chance of Down syndrome is higher if the NT measurement is larger and/or if the nasal bone is not readily visible.

Your age, the NT and NB measurements and the blood test results are combined to develop a personalized risk that describes how likely it is that the baby is chromosomally normal or has Down syndrome. This is presented in the form of a ratio eg 1 in 2000.

Most pregnancies have a low risk result. It is important to be aware that while a low risk result is reassuring, it does not eliminate the chance of Down syndrome.

If the NT assessment determines your baby is at increased risk of chromosomal abnormality, this does not mean the baby is affected, but may indicate that further investigation would be reasonable should you wish to consider it. Options for further investigation include NIPT, Amniocentesis and CVS. Your doctor will be able to provide advice about further testing if required.

### **Screening for early onset pre-eclampsia**

A small amount of women develop high blood pressure that leads to them being delivered very early (<34 weeks) in pregnancy. This condition is described as pre-eclampsia.

During combined first trimester screening, we can now screen for this condition. We will ask you some questions relating to your general health, personal and family history. We will also take your blood pressure and as part of the scan, take measurements of the blood flow through the arteries which supply the uterus. Using this approach, we can identify approximately 90% of women destined to develop early onset pre-eclampsia. In the event of an increased risk of pre-eclampsia, your Doctor will have the opportunity to initiate appropriate treatment at the optimum time and monitor the pregnancy a little more closely.

### **Reporting**

Our scans are thoroughly reviewed and reported on by Dr Rajit Narayan, a Maternal Fetal Medicine specialist based at RPA in Sydney. This report will be forwarded to your referring Doctor the next working day after your scan.

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