

## Patient information

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

## Low PAPP-A

This information letter has been sent to you because you have been found to have a low Papp-A result on your recent antenatal screening blood test. This does not affect the results of the screening tests that you will have already received.

## What is PAPP-A

Pregnancy Associated Plasma Protein-A is a protein that is made by the placenta. It is measured as part of the combined screening blood test.

## What does low Papp-A mean?

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

However, low levels of PAPP-A may be associated with an increased chance of pregnancy complications including a smaller than expected (growth restricted) or earlier than expected (preterm) baby. There is also a slightly higher chance of developing pre-eclampsia (a condition that can affect pregnancies causing raised blood pressure and protein in the urine).

The risks of developing these conditions can be reduced by taking low-dose aspirin. In line with national guidelines we would recommend that you start taking **Aspirin 150mg once daily at night**, until the birth of your baby, provided that you are not allergic to aspirin or any other non-steroidal medications (eg ibuprofen) and have no history of a gastro-intestinal bleeding disorder. This can be obtained from any local pharmacy.

We would also like to offer you extra scans to monitor the growth of your baby more closely. 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, 36 and 39 weeks of your pregnancy.

We will also offer you a uterine artery doppler measurement between 20 - 23 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 uses sound waves to check 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 (a blood pressure condition). 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, scans and hospital or midwife appointments during your pregnancy. This means that if any issues do arise they can be picked up as early as possible.

In addition to these extra appointments 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

## **What can I do to help my baby grow well?**

If you smoke, it is extremely important that you stop. Smoking can seriously affect the function of the placenta and the baby's growth. You can speak to your midwife for referral to 'One life Suffolk' or 'Smoke Free Norfolk', depending on your address; they will provide you with help and support, including the offer of nicotine replacement therapies. Alternatively, you may wish to contact them directly yourself to book an appointment at a smoking cessation clinic near you.

One Life Suffolk: Tel: 01473 718193  
Email: [info@onelifesuffolk.co.uk](mailto:info@onelifesuffolk.co.uk)  
Web: [www.onelifesuffolk.co.uk/quit-smoking](http://www.onelifesuffolk.co.uk/quit-smoking)

Smoke Free Norfolk: Tel: 0800 0854113  
Web: [www.smokefreenorfolk.nhs.uk/pregnancy](http://www.smokefreenorfolk.nhs.uk/pregnancy)

WSH Smoking Cessation Specialist Midwife  
Mobile: 07387 099 172  
Email: [stopsmokingmidwife@wsh.nhs.uk](mailto:stopsmokingmidwife@wsh.nhs.uk)

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.

## Contact details

Receiving the news of having extra test may cause anxiety but please be assured that the majority of babies will have normal growth. If you have any queries or concerns, please feel free to contact the Antenatal and Newborn Screening midwives:

Tel: 01284 712567

Email: [annbscreening@wsh.nhs.uk](mailto:annbscreening@wsh.nhs.uk)

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)*

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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