



A patient guide to antepartum testing

What is Antepartum Testing?

Antepartum testing evaluates the well being of the baby, in certain high risk patients.

Antepartum testing, which has been done since the 1970's, determines how well the placenta is supplying the needed oxygen and nutrients to the baby. Your tests will be performed by a specially trained registered nurse in the Hoag Hospital Newport Beach Fetal Diagnostic Center.

Who Is Tested?

Women are tested when they have conditions in pregnancy that may lead to poor placental function such as advanced maternal age, diabetes, chronic hypertension, prolonged pregnancy, pre-eclampsia, or if there is decreased fetal movement or slow growth of the fetus. For these and other indications your doctor will determine the need for antepartum testing during pregnancy, and which type of test to do.

What Tests Are Done?

Non-Stress Test (NST)

You will be connected to a fetal monitor and your baby's heart rate patterns will be observed during fetal movement and fetal rest periods. This test usually takes 15 – 40 minutes.

Amniotic Fluid Index (AFI)

The amount of amniotic fluid surrounding your baby is measured using ultrasound. This test usually takes five minutes.

Biophysical Profile

A non-stress test is performed and then, using ultrasound, four parameters are evaluated. These include fetal movement and muscle tone, fetal breathing and the amount of amniotic fluid present (AFI). This test usually takes 30 – 60 minutes.

Modified Biophysical Profile

A non-stress test and the amniotic fluid index are both done. This test usually takes 30 – 45 minutes.

Contraction Stress Test (CST)

You will be connected to a fetal monitor and your baby's heart rate patterns will be observed during fetal movement and during a period when you are having three contractions within a 10-minute period. The contractions feel like the Braxton-Hicks contractions that many expectant mothers normally experience during pregnancy.

A technique called nipple stimulation is used to produce these contractions. It involves rubbing your fingers gently over your nipples. This stimulates the release of various amounts of the hormone oxytocin, which causes your uterus to contract. If a sufficient amount is released you will produce three contractions within 10 minutes and your test will be concluded. If not, an intravenous line (IV) will be started and oxytocin will be given at selected rates through your IV. When three contractions in 10 minutes are produced, the IV is discontinued. This test usually takes one to two hours.

When Will I Know My Results?

Our perinatologist, a doctor who specializes in high-risk pregnancies, will evaluate your test within 24 hours. You may have subsequent appointments scheduled for every 3 – 4 days. In certain circumstances, your test may be interpreted as "equivocal," meaning there is an area on the test that needs more investigation. You may be monitored for a while longer or you may be scheduled to return the next day to repeat the test.

Visitors

You are welcome to bring a support person with you. If you need to bring children with you, please bring another adult to supervise your children. Additionally, for the consideration of others, we ask that no fragrances be worn, as many patients are very sensitive to various scents.

Registration

Prior to your first appointment, you will need to register. You can pre-register online by visiting hoag.org/pregnancy and clicking "Have your baby at Hoag." If you mailed in your registration form, please call 949/764-8424 to verify it has been entered in our system. We are located in the Sue and Bill Gross Women's Pavilion on the 6th Floor.

Test Preparation

Wear comfortable clothing and be sure to eat before coming in for your test. Your baby is usually more active after a meal. No other preparation is necessary. Diabetic patients, please bring your meter and a snack with you.

We Are Here To Help

The registered nurse performing your test is available throughout your visit to explain everything and answer any questions you may have. Please notify the Fetal Diagnostic Center (949/764-8034) 24 hours in advance if you are unable to keep your appointment.



Hoag Hospital Newport Beach Sue and Bill Gross Women's Pavilion

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