



What is MSS?

MSS is a blood test available to all pregnant women in Ontario. MSS measures four different hormones that have been produced by the baby's liver and the placenta. These hormones pass into the mother's blood stream in small amounts.

MSS measures these amounts and compares them to the average level for women in the same week of pregnancy. From this information, the chance of a baby having trisomy 18, Down syndrome, or open neural tube defect (spina bifida) is calculated.

It is important to be aware that every pregnant couple in the general population has a 2-3% risk of having a baby with a birth defect. While normal results of prenatal testing are reassuring, they do not guarantee the birth of a healthy baby.



MATERNAL SERUM SCREENING (MSS)

WHAT DOES SCREEN POSITIVE
FOR DOWN SYNDROME MEAN?



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WHAT DOES SCREEN POSITIVE FOR DOWN SYNDROME MEAN?

A screen positive result means the chance of the baby having Down syndrome is increased compared to other pregnancies. Only further testing can tell if the baby is affected. When the maternal serum screen result is positive for Down syndrome, most times the baby is healthy and does not have Down syndrome.

WHAT IS DOWN SYNDROME?

Chromosomes are the packages of our genetic information. The genetic information is responsible for our body structure and function. Chromosomes are passed from parents to their children through the mother's egg and the father's sperm. The usual number of chromosomes is 46, in 23 pairs. One copy of each pair comes from our mother and the other copy comes from our father.

A baby with Down syndrome has 47 chromosomes (an extra number 21 chromosome). The extra chromosome causes the variety of differences seen in babies with Down syndrome.

Individuals with Down syndrome have some common physical characteristics, different degrees of mental handicap and an increased risk for medical problems including congenital heart defects. There is no way to predict how serious any of the disabilities will be.

WHAT DOES YOUR RISK NUMBER MEAN?

You can ask your health care provider to give you your risk figure that is written down on the report. For example, the report might read 1:100 which means that your chance of delivering a baby with Down syndrome in this pregnancy is 1 in 100. The chance of your baby **NOT** being affected with Down syndrome is 99 out of 100.

YOUR RESULT IS SCREEN POSITIVE FOR DOWN SYNDROME – WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

When a result is screen positive for Down syndrome, the blood test is not repeated.

The first step your health care provider will take is to check your pregnancy dates. If you have not had an ultrasound, one will be suggested to find out if the pregnancy is as far along as you thought.

If the ultrasound agrees with your dates, you will be asked to decide if you want to have a test called amniocentesis. Amniocentesis is used to find out if the baby is affected with Down syndrome. This procedure will be discussed fully with you. It is your choice whether to have more testing.

If your dates are different from the ultrasound dates by 10 or more days, the result will be recalculated. The recalculated result might or might not be positive. Your health care provider will be notified of the result.

