

# MSS – SCREEN NEGATIVE



## 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 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.

## WHAT DOES SCREEN NEGATIVE MEAN?

A result is called screen negative when a pregnant woman's blood has the usual amount of these hormones. This means the chance of her baby having Down syndrome, trisomy 18, or an open neural tube defect is reduced.

## 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 1:500 which means that your chance of delivering a baby with Down syndrome in this pregnancy is 1 in 500. The chance of your baby NOT being affected with Down syndrome is 499 out of 500.

## DOES THIS RESULT MEAN THAT MY BABY IS NORMAL?

A screen negative result does not guarantee a normal baby. Many other problems that a baby can have are not found by doing maternal serum screening. Because this is a screening tool and not a diagnostic test, even when the result is negative, a small number of babies will have Down syndrome, trisomy 18, or neural tube defect.

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.

