Amniocentesis

Information for patients

What is an amniocentesis?

This is a procedure usually performed at about the 16th week of pregnancy and involves taking a sample of the fluid that surrounds your baby. We can use this fluid *(amniotic fluid)* which contains skin cells to detect chromosomal conditions such as Down's syndrome and Edward's syndrome.

What does the test involve?

Firstly you will have an ultrasound scan in order to find out the position of your baby and placenta. We obtain a small sample of amniotic fluid by passing a fine needle through your abdomen into your uterus *(womb)*. We then send this sample off for laboratory testing *(karyoptying)* together with a small sample of your blood.

As soon as the procedure is finished you may go home. We advise that you rest for 48 hours and contact maternity triage for further advice if you develop vaginal discharge, bleeding, abdominal pain or a fever.

The result

The test for Down's Syndrome is normally available within 48-72 hours. We will inform of you of the result by telephone. The test will tell us the sex of your baby. This result will be available to you if you wish.

Further information

Please note :

Although every care will be taken, amniocentesis does carry a risk. About 1 in 100 women who have an amniocentesis will have a miscarriage.

Amniocentesis detects Down's syndrome and other **chromosomal** abnormalities such as Edwards Syndrome, Pataus Syndrome and Turners Syndrome.

Amniocentesis **cannot** detect other structural abnormalities and therefore a normal chromosome result does not guarantee a normal healthy baby.

If you have any further questions please contact either Louise McCabe, Elaine Gregor or Michelle Clarke on **01698 366353** or Maternity Triage on **01698 366210**.

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University Hospital Wishaw
50 Netherton Street
Wishaw ML2 0DP
Telephone 01698 361100

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Author:	Perinatal Midwives
Telephone:	01698 366353

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