What Are We Looking For with Prenatal Screening?

Most babies are born healthy. But any woman can have a baby with a birth defect or serious medical problem. You may want to have tests done which can tell you about your chances of having a baby with certain birth defects or certain genetic conditions.

This page tells you about some conditions that can be found with screening. Whether or not you have these tests is up to you.

Down syndrome

- Leads to learning problems (life-long slow mental ability), health problems, and sometimes birth defects.
- Children with Down syndrome are usually able to do many things that other children can. They do need extra medical care and help with learning.
- Children do not usually die from Down syndrome.
- Most children with Down syndrome are born to young, healthy parents.
- Most children with Down syndrome are born to parents with no family history of Down syndrome.

Trisomy 18

- A serious combination of birth defects and brain damage.
- Most babies with Trisomy 18 die before birth or soon after. Those that live are severely disabled.
- Most children with Trisomy 18 are born to young, healthy parents.
- Most babies with Trisomy 18 are born to parents with no family history of the condition.

Other chromosome abnormalities

- Can be very serious, like Trisomy 18 or fairly minor, depending on the condition.
- Often affect health.
- Often affect learning abilities.
- Sometimes affect the ability to have children.
Neural Tube Defects (NTDS)

- NTDs happen very early in pregnancy.
  - The neural tube develops into the baby’s brain and spinal cord.
  - If the neural tube does not form normally, this leads to birth defects of the backbone, spinal cord and/or brain.
  - Some open spine defects can be treated with surgery before birth.
- Some NTDs can be fixed by surgery after birth.
  - Even with surgery, many children with NTDs have physical disabilities and/or learning problems.
  - Some NTDs are so serious that babies die from them.
- Most babies with NTDs are born to healthy parents with no family history of the condition.

Questions? Call Us!
Prenatal Diagnosis and Genetics
(505) 272-8913