FACT SHEET - Prospective Parents – Prenatal Screening & Options

A basic understanding of what prenatal screening is, is often overlooked and many prospective parents are not sure what it all means, what their choices are, and if prenatal screening is even a choice.

Prenatal Screening

Down Syndrome Queensland

Ideally you should start thinking about prenatal screening before pregnancy – however, during the early stages of pregnancy, understanding what your options are is very important.

It is recommended that you have a basic understanding of:

- What the options are – types of prenatal screening available?
- What is actually being screened?
- What does the accuracy for each screening type mean?
- What are the potential risks?

Prenatal screening tests include:

- Combined first trimester screening: Nuchal translucency ultrasound at 12-13+6 weeks combined with a blood test from the mother
- Non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT): testing of the mother's blood

- Second trimester screening: testing of the mother's blood (maternal serum testing) between 15-20 weeks of pregnancy
- Ultrasound at 18-20 weeks

Talk openly with your healthcare professional about your options, and ensure you ask any questions around prenatal screening.

For more information, see further resources on prenatal screening:

https://www.mcri.edu.au/sites/default/files/media/your_choice_2018.pdf

https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/rbwh/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/08/prenatal-brochure.pdf

https://www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au/prenatal-screening-overview

References

Down Syndrome Queensland. (2022). Practice Resource – Prenatal Screening for Chromosomal Conditions including Down syndrome. https://prenatalscreening.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Prenatal-Screening-Practice-Resource.pdf

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