



## CLINICAL GUIDELINE

# Low Pregnancy Associated Plasma Protein (PAPP-A) level in pregnancy, Obstetrics

A guideline is intended to assist healthcare professionals in the choice of disease-specific treatments.

Clinical judgement should be exercised on the applicability of any guideline, influenced by individual patient characteristics. Clinicians should be mindful of the potential for harmful polypharmacy and increased susceptibility to adverse drug reactions in patients with multiple morbidities or frailty.

If, after discussion with the patient or carer, there are good reasons for not following a guideline, it is good practice to record these and communicate them to others involved in the care of the patient.

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### Important Note:

The Intranet version of this document is the only version that is maintained. Any printed copies should therefore be viewed as 'Uncontrolled' and as such, may not necessarily contain the latest updates and amendments.

# Low PAPP-A level in pregnancy

## (Pregnancy Associated Plasma Protein A)

Receiving the news that you have a low PAPP-A level may cause you anxiety and although studies have shown low PAPP-A can be associated with low birth weight babies and preterm (early birth) the majority of babies will have normal growth.

The following information aims to explain how a low PAPP-A level will affect the management of your pregnancy.

### **What is PAPP-A?**

Pregnancy associated plasma protein A (PAPP-A) is a protein that is produced by the placenta in pregnancy.

It is one of two proteins that is measured during the combined screening test for Down's syndrome (NT screening).

Studies have shown that low PAPP-A levels may be associated with low birth weight babies and premature (early) birth. National guidelines therefore suggest that extra ultrasound scans should be considered to check the growth of babies when a low PAPP-A level has been found.

Although PAPP-A is associated with low birth weight, the majority of babies will have normal growth and be healthy.

### **What happens next?**

You have already received the results of the combined test via letter or phone call from the screening team.

Some women may also be advised to commence low dose Aspirin (150mg) at night and if this is the case your midwife or consultant will let you know and a letter will be sent to your GP.

During your 20 week scan we check the growth of your baby. Following these measurements a plan will be made for growth scans during the remainder of your pregnancy. The frequency of scans will be determined by the findings of the scan at 20 weeks but for the majority of women these scans will take place at 32 and 36 weeks.

### **Is there anything I can do to help my baby to grow well?**

If you smoke, it is extremely important that you stop. Smoking can seriously affect the function of the placenta and the baby's growth. Your midwife can refer you for help to stop smoking or you can refer yourself to NHS smoking cessation service.

For those babies that are found to be small, you will have the reassurance of close monitoring by your midwifery and Obstetric team

### **Who can I speak to if I need further information?**

If you have any queries or concerns, you are welcome to phone

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