



Integrated Screen

A guide to prenatal testing

At University of Washington Medical Center, we partner with our patients and families in making decisions about their health care.

This handout gives information to help you decide if you want to have an integrated screen.

Having this test is up to you. Some people do not find this type of screening test to be helpful. You may refuse testing at any time.

Talk with your health care provider to learn more.

What is an integrated screen?

An *integrated screen* is a test done during pregnancy that tells you the chance of your baby having *Down syndrome*, *trisomy 18*, or *spina bifida*. The integrated screen does **not** diagnose these conditions.

How is an integrated screen done?

An integrated screen has 3 parts – an *ultrasound* done between 11 and 14 weeks of pregnancy and 2 blood draws, done at different times, from the mother’s arm.

Ultrasound

During the ultrasound, the baby’s length is measured to confirm the due date. Ultrasound is also used to measure the small space under the skin behind your baby’s neck, called the *nuchal translucency* (NT). This space is often larger than normal when the baby has Down syndrome or trisomy 18.

Blood Draws

The first blood draw is done in the first trimester, usually the same day as the NT ultrasound. The second blood draw is done in the second trimester, between 15 and 20 weeks of pregnancy. The blood tests measure certain proteins and hormones made by the baby and placenta, which are found in every pregnant woman’s blood. The amounts of these proteins and hormones are often different when the baby has Down syndrome, trisomy 18, or spina bifida.

What do I learn from an integrated screen?

An integrated screen has 3 results, which are numbers such as “1 in 4,000 (0.025%)” or “1 in 75 (1.3%).” These numbers are the *odds* or *chances* that your baby has Down syndrome, trisomy 18, or spina bifida. The results are usually available within a week after the second blood draw.

What are the alternatives to an integrated screen?

If a nuchal translucency can't be measured in your baby, you can still do the 2 blood draws and get results. The accuracy is slightly lower, but it can still be a helpful test.

If you are already past 14 weeks of pregnancy, ask your provider about doing a *quad screen*.

Questions?

Your questions are important. If you have any further questions about an integrated screen, talk with your provider before signing any consent forms.

UWMC clinic staff is also available to help at any time.

Prenatal Diagnosis
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Maternal and Infant Care
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The integrated screen can detect 9 out of 10 cases (90%) of Down syndrome and trisomy 18, and 8 out of 10 cases (80%) of spina bifida. But, it will not detect all cases of these birth defects, and it does not test for any other health problems. If you are having a multiple birth, an integrated screen is less accurate but may still be helpful.

What are the benefits of an integrated screen?

An integrated screen provides you with information about your baby's health without any risk to your pregnancy.

What are the risks of an integrated screen?

Most people are worried when they get an abnormal integrated screen result. It can cause stress for the rest of your pregnancy, especially if you decide not to have all the follow-up testing.

What does a "positive" result mean?

A few women (about 5%, or 1 out of 20) have a "positive" integrated screen. This does **not** mean their baby has a birth defect. It only means that the risk of their baby having 1 of these 3 conditions is higher than a certain level. **Most women who have a positive integrated screen result will have a healthy baby.**

If your provider tells you that your integrated screen result is positive but does not give you the exact risk, you may want to ask for more information. Often, people feel better when they know the exact odds of their baby having a birth defect. For example, a risk of 1 out of 10 (10%) for Down syndrome also means there is a 9 out of 10 (90%) chance the baby does **not** have Down syndrome.

If you have a positive integrated screen result, your health care provider will offer you follow-up appointments, such as a visit with a genetic counselor and an ultrasound to carefully examine the baby's anatomy. You may also choose to have an *amniocentesis*. Amniocentesis is a test that will tell you whether or not your baby has Down syndrome, trisomy 18, or spina bifida.

What does a "negative" result mean?

Most women (about 95%, or 19 out of 20) will have a "negative" integrated screen. This does not mean their baby is completely healthy. It only means that the chance of the baby having 1 of these 3 conditions is lower than a certain level. **A few women who have a negative integrated screen result will have a baby with Down syndrome, trisomy 18, or spina bifida.**