
MATERNAL SERUM SCREENING FACT SHEET

Maternal Serum Screening (MSS) is offered to all pregnant women, regardless of maternal age. (SOGC Guidelines, No.197 Prenatal Screening for Fetal Aneuploidy. February 2007)

All pregnant candidates would need to have the maternal serum screen offered with informed consent i.e. with a detailed explanation of the testing procedure and of the test itself.

Gestational dating at the time of testing is important; optimally, the screening is done at 15-16 weeks gestation.

Down's syndrome, also called Trisomy 21, is characterized by an extra chromosome 21. The effects can include mental retardation and physical defects. Trisomy 18 is a syndrome characterized by an extra chromosome 18 that results in significant physical and mental defects. Neural tube defects include spina bifida and anencephaly.

The test results are reported as either "screen positive" or "screen negative". The QUAD test has a 75% detection rate with a 5% false positive for Down Syndrome (within SOGC recommendations).

Any "screen positive" would indicate a referral to a physician and genetic counseling.

The Maternal Serum Screening test results are not considered diagnostic but are useful in helping identify those pregnancies where further testing and discussion may be warranted. Further testing would necessitate a referral to an obstetrician.

Further testing may include amniocentesis, detailed fetal ultrasound, nuchal translucency with referral to amniocentesis as indicated.