Testing, Testing

You're not just being poked from the inside – your doc is also needling you from the outside. Knowing what the tests are for makes them easier to get through. By Rachel Rabkin Pechman

The Tests	First Trimester Screening	Chorionic Villus Sampling	Multiple Marker Screen	Amnio	Anatomy Ultrasound
WHAT IT'S DONE	11 ½ to 14 weeks	10 to 14 weeks	15 to 20 weeks	15 to 21 weeks	18 to 20 weeks
WHO SHOULD TAKE IT	This test is offered to all pregnant women. The screening consists of a blood test and an ultrasound	Women whose nuchal screen revealed a potential problem, who are 35 or older, or who have a family history of a genetic disorder	Woman who didn't take the first trimester screen; those whose first-trimester screen was negative or showed some risk. May be combined with the first-trimester screen	Women whose screening test revealed a potential problem, who are 35 or older, or who are at increased risk for certain conditions	All pregnant women are offered this (fascinating!) screening
WHAT YOU'LL FIND OUT	You'll learn your baby's risk for chromosomal abnormalities such as (trisomy 21), trisomy 18, or trisomy 13. the screening correctly identifies about 88% of women carrying a baby with these abnormalities like any medical test, though, it comes with the slight possibility of false positives.	This diagnostic test will determine if your baby has a chromosomal abnormality or other genetic disorders. You'll also be able to find out the sex. (So if you don't want to know, be sure to ask your doctor not to spill the beans!)	This test reveals your baby's risk of having a chromosomal abnormality or a neural tube defect such as a spina bifida. The screen correctly identifies about 80% of women carrying a baby with Down syndrome, but it is known to turn up false positives in 6 to 7 % of cases.	This diagnostic test will show whether or not your baby has a chromosomal issue or other genetic disorder such as cystic fibrosis. As with chorionic villus sampling, once you know your baby's chromosome results, you'll also know the gender. If you want to keep it a surprise, tell your technician!	You'll learn the baby's placental location, your amniotic fluid level, and the fetal heart rate, and see whether certain birth defects (such as a heart condition, spina bifida, or cleft palate) are present. You'll also discover the sex (if you want to know)
WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE TEST	Blood is drawn and analyzed for levels of plasma protein A (PAPP-A) and beta human chorionic (beta-HCG). An ultrasound measures the nuchal fold (at the back of the baby's neck) and nasal bone; infants with Down syndrome tent to have thicker nuchal folds and may be missing a nasal bone.	The doctor inserts a thin, hollow tube through the cervix or a fine-gauge needle into your abdomen to remove a tiny sample of chorionic villi (hair like projections of the placenta fetal cells with your baby's chromosomes and DNA). The actual removal process takes about a minute.	Blood is drawn and analyzed for levels of four substances; maternal serum alpha-fetoprotein (MSAFP), human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG), estriol, and Inhibin A.	Your doctor will insert a thin, hollow needle through your abdomen to removed a few teaspoons of amniotic fluid, which contains cells with Baby's chromosomes and DNA. You'll probably feel a pinching or stinging sensation with the needle enters and some menstrual-like cramps during the procedure.	The doctor or technician will do a detailed sonogram lasting about 20 minutes. The most important areas to check out are the heart, spine, brain, kidneys, and other major organs. Some practitioners offer a 3-D view. Either way, you'll get a truly extraordinary glimpse of your baby!
WHAT THE RISKS ARE	None.	There is a 1 percent risk of miscarriage	None	There is a 0.5 percent risk of miscarriage	None