

## How much does screening cost?

The fee is \$162. Most prepaid health plans and insurance companies pay the fee. **Medi-Cal** also pays it.

The \$162 fee covers the blood tests as well as authorized diagnostic tests.

This fee does **not** cover Nuchal Translucency Ultrasound (NT).



## How can I get more information?

Please talk to your doctor or clinic about these prenatal screening tests.

All pregnant women will receive a booklet called "The California Prenatal Screening Program." Patients should sign the consent form "Yes" or "No".

**Note:** Patients with a family history of birth defects may want to go directly to diagnostic testing instead of screening. Talk to your doctor or clinic.

Please visit our website for more information:

[www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/pns](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/pns)

California Department of Public Health  
**Genetic Disease Screening Program**  
850 Marina Bay Parkway, F175  
Richmond, CA 94804  
(866)718-7915 *toll free*

April, 2009

## Prenatal Screening Tests



**To help detect  
birth defects**

THE CALIFORNIA  
PRENATAL SCREENING PROGRAM

**It is important to get prenatal care as soon as you think you are pregnant....**

Early care can help you have a healthy baby.

### **Prenatal Screening Tests:**

One or two blood tests, plus a special ultrasound, can help detect some birth defects. For example, they can help find spina bifida and Down syndrome in babies before they are born. Spina bifida is a birth defect that often causes paralysis. Down syndrome causes mental retardation. The Prenatal Screening tests also help find some other birth defects.

### **Can I have prenatal screening tests to help find birth defects?**

Yes. If you want the tests, talk to your doctor or clinic. You will receive a booklet to read.



### **How can I get the Prenatal tests?**

A doctor or clinic will order one or two blood tests:

1. Get a blood test between 10 weeks and 13 weeks 6 days of pregnancy. This is called a **First Trimester test**.
2. Get a second blood test between 15 and 20 weeks of pregnancy. This is called a **Second Trimester test**.

Sometimes you can also get a special ultrasound called Nuchal Translucency (NT). It is done between 11 weeks 2 days and 14 weeks 2 days of pregnancy.

If the results of these tests are put together, it is called **Integrated Screening**.

### **What do the results show?**

Most of the time screening will be "normal" or "Screen Negative". This means your baby **probably** does not have spina bifida, Down syndrome or some other birth defects.

### **What if the screening test results are "Screen Positive"?**

This means that there is a higher than usual chance for some birth defects. But diagnostic tests are needed to know if there really is a birth defect.

You would be offered **free** follow-up services at a State-approved Prenatal Diagnosis Center. A Genetic Counselor will explain the test results and offer free diagnostic testing.

**Most of the time**, no birth defects are found during diagnostic tests. Most babies are healthy.

**Once in a while**, diagnostic tests will detect a birth defect. A counselor will help the woman or couple make decisions about the pregnancy.