**Women’s & Children’s**

Patient Information Leaflet (PL)

**Low PAPP-A**

**What is PAPP-A?**

PAPP-A stands for Pregnancy Associated Plasma Protein A, this is a protein hormone found in your bloodstream during pregnancy which is produced by the placenta (afterbirth).

Your PAPP-A has been measured in the combined first trimester screening to help calculate the chance of you baby having Down, Edward or Patau Syndrome (chromosomal disorders).

**Why is PAPP-A important?**

Although in most cases, PAPP-A does not have any impact on your pregnancy, research has shown that a lower level of this hormone (<0.41 MoM) may be associated with poor attachment of the placenta which may lead to:

* Reduced growth of the baby (small for gestational age/SGA).
* Increased chances of developing pre-eclampsia (high blood pressure in pregnancy).
* Increased chance of pre-term birth.

**What does this mean for my pregnancy?**

To help try and reduce pregnancy complications developing, it is recommended that you take **Aspirin 150 mg daily with your evening meal from 12 weeks** of pregnancy or as soon as possible after 12 weeks if low levels of PAPP-A are found after this period of time. Aspirin helps to thin your blood slightly to improve placental function. It has also been proven to reduce the incidence of high blood pressure and pre-term births.

Your Midwife will check your blood pressure and urine at each routine visit to check for protein which may indicate developing pre-eclampsia. You will be offered a Consultant appointment at the hospital and a number of scans will be organised from 26 weeks of pregnancy every four weeks until delivery (26 weeks, 30 weeks, 34 weeks & 38 weeks).

If your baby is found to be growing normally as seen on your personal GROW chart (this is an individualised chart that displays the expected growth of your baby), you will continue to see your Midwife as usual.

If you baby continues to grow normally and you do not have any other medical conditions that require early delivery, you will be offered an induction of labour around your due date. Your Midwife will be able to explain the procedure later in your pregnancy.

If your baby is found to be smaller than expected, you will be offered extra scans and depending on your baby’s weight and the stage of pregnancy, you may be referred for a fetal medicine scan for increased monitoring.

**What can I do to help my baby grow well?**

It is well known that smoking in pregnancy can affect your baby’s growth negatively. If you are a smoker, it would be advisable for you to stop smoking to give your baby the best chance of growth. Your Midwife can refer you to our dedicated smoking cessation service if you decide to quit smoking.

Maintaining a healthy weight and gentle exercise is encouraged in women with low PAPP-A as it is in all pregnancies.

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

Receiving the news that you have low PAPP-A levels may cause anxiety but please be assured that the majority of babies will have normal growth.

If you have any further questions, please speak to your community Midwife. You may also contact the Antenatal and Newborn Screening Office on 01908 995 236.

**Further information**

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has a leaflet that provides more advice and information around the growth of your baby. To find this information visit: [www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/patient-leaflets/having-a-small-baby/](http://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/patient-leaflets/having-a-small-baby/)

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