

**MATERNAL SERUM ALPHAFETOPROTEIN  
(MSAFP)**

**CONSENT/REFUSAL**

While most babies are born healthy, there is always a small chance of having a child with birth defects. A simple blood test during pregnancy can detect two common birth defects; neural tube defects and Down Syndrome. About 1/1000 babies is born with a neural tube defect. Spina bifida (open spine) and anencephaly (open skull) occur when the neural tube, the structure which forms the brain and spine, does not completely develop early in fetal life. Infants with anencephaly cannot survive because much of the brain and skull is absent. Infants with spina bifida may die or may survive with a variety of handicaps. The degree of handicap depends on where the opening is and how big it is. Most, but not all, neural tube defects can be discovered with a blood test done between 15 and 20 weeks of pregnancy. When an open defect is present in a fetus, large amounts of substance called alphafetoprotein usually are found in the mother's blood.

About 1/650 babies has Down Syndrome, the most common cause of mental retardation. Children with this condition also may have other physical defects and health problems. AFP, HCG and UE3 combined may show that there is an increased chance that the fetus has Down Syndrome. If you wish to have this test done, a blood sample will be taken between 15 and 20 weeks after your last menstrual period. Your doctor will receive the test results within a week to ten days following the test.

Important points to remember:

1. An abnormal screening test does not mean your baby has a birth defect. If does mean further testing is necessary.
2. Abnormal test results will be telephoned to your doctor. Normal results will be mailed.
3. Further testing that may be recommended includes: A) another blood test, B) an ultrasound scan, C) amniocentesis, which involves taking fluid from the sac surrounding the fetus.
4. If a birth defect is found, you will be provided with genetic counseling about the type and severity of the problem. Decisions about management of the pregnancy when there is an abnormality will be yours.
5. The MSAFP plus test will no look for all types of birth defects. In women under age of 35 it can find 60-65 percent of fetuses with Down Syndrome and in women 35 and over it will detect 85 percent. In all women about 85 percent of fetuses with open neural tube defects will be found with the MSAFP Plus test.

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read this form and other information provided by my doctor and have had any questions answered. I \_\_\_\_\_ DO choose to have by my blood drawn. I \_\_\_\_\_ DO NOT

Patient Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person obtaining the consent \_\_\_\_\_