

Coombe Fetal Medicine

ULTRASOUND AND FETAL MEDICINE CENTRE

HARMONY PRE-NATAL SCREENING INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

The vast majority of babies are normal at birth. All women, whatever their age, have a small chance of delivering a baby with a disability. Screening for problems such as Down syndrome, Edwards' syndrome and Patau syndrome has changed dramatically over the years. It

is now possible to use the genetic material from the baby which can be found in the mother by a simple and safe blood test.

What is the Harmony screening?

The Harmony screening analyses cell free DNA in maternal blood and gives a strong indication of whether the fetus is at high or low risk of having trisomy 21 (Down syndrome), trisomy 18 (Edwards' syndrome) or trisomy 13 (Patau syndrome).

Trisomy 21 is the most common trisomy also called Down syndrome. It is associated with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities and may also lead to digestive disease, congenital heart defects and other malformations.

Trisomy 18 (Edwards' syndrome) and Trisomy 13 (Patau syndrome) are associated with a high rate of miscarriage. Most affected individuals die before or soon after birth, and very few survive beyond the first year of life.

What are the risks, and how accurate is it?

The screening is non-invasive: it involves taking a blood sample from the mother. The pregnancy is not put at risk of miscarriage, or from other adverse outcomes that are associated with invasive procedures such as amniocentesis.

Accuracy

Clinical studies have shown that the Harmony Prenatal Screening has exceptional accuracy for assessing fetal trisomy.

A "high risk" result is indicative of a possible trisomy.

The Harmony screening identifies:

- 99% of the fetuses with trisomy 21 (Down syndrome)
- 97% of fetuses with trisomy 18 (Edwards' syndrome)
- 92% of fetuses with trisomy 13 (Patau syndrome)

After the screening, the number of women required to have a CVS or amniocentesis is significantly reduced. This means that Harmony reduces the risk of unnecessary amniocentesis.

It is important to note that if the results show there is a “high risk” that the fetus has trisomy 21, 18, or 13 it does not mean that the fetus definitely has one of these conditions. For this reason, in the event of a “high risk” (or positive) result, follow-up testing by additional testing is recommended before any decisions are made.

In the same way if the screening results show that there is a “low risk” that the fetus has trisomy 21, 18, 13, or sex chromosome conditions, it is unlikely that the fetus has one of these conditions.

Who can have the screening?

The Harmony screening can be performed after 10+2 weeks of gestation. It can be performed in both single and twin pregnancies (but is not suitable in the case of a vanishing twin) and can be performed for all IVF pregnancies.

The results will be ready in approximately 7 to 10 days.

How do I get my results from the Harmony screening?

The midwife will contact you directly once the results of the Harmony screening have returned.

Sometimes the initial sample of your blood may not give a result. This is related to technical factors and does not mean there is a problem with your baby. It is more likely for this to occur if you are earlier in your pregnancy (such as 10 weeks gestation, rather than 13 weeks gestation) or due to factors such as increased maternal weight.

If this happens, we will call you to organize the collection of another sample of your blood, at no additional cost. For most patients, this repeat sample will give a result.

Will I always get a result?

3 out of 100 women will require repeat screening. A result is obtained in approximately two thirds of these samples.

FEE

The fee for this screening for all patients is 400 euro which is payable on the day prior to the screening being done.

Booking:

If you wish to book a Harmony Screening please email the following information

Name
Date of Birth
Hospital number (if known)
First day of your last period
Mobile number

To:

prenatalscreening@coombe.ie:

All correspondence for these screenings is through this email address.