Information about First Trimester Screening (FTS)

The vast majority of babies are normal. However all women, whatever their age, have a small risk of delivering a baby with a physical or a mental limitation. In some cases this may be due to a chromosomal problem such as Down syndrome.

The only way to know for sure whether or not your baby may have a chromosomal problem is by having an invasive test, such as Chorionic Villus Sampling (CVS) or amniocentesis (amnio). However, these tests have a small chance of causing a miscarriage of about 0.5% to 1% (about one chance in 100 or one chance in 200).

This FTS test helps you and your partner decide whether the chances that your baby may have a chromosomal problem is high enough to warrant having an invasive test, such as CVS or amnio.

The most accurate way of estimating the chances of your baby having a chromosomal problem is the FTS test, which is carried out at 11-13 weeks, and includes:

- Your age
- Nuchal Translucency (amount of fluid behind the neck of the fetus on ultrasound)
- Presence or absence of any physical abnormalities on ultrasound
- Level of two proteins (Fß-hCG & PAPP-A) in your blood.

By combining this information, the FTS test can identify about 9 out of 10 pregnancies (90%) in which the baby has Down syndrome.

This is more accurate than either the ultrasound part or the blood part of the test done on their own.

Since the blood test for the protein levels is done in our unit, your results will be available the same day. The chances of Down syndrome will then be discussed with you. Only you can decide if you wish to have an invasive diagnostic test based on this risk.

If the thickness of the skin at the back of the baby's neck is quite big other problems may be present. These may include heart problems and other rare genetic conditions. However, it is important to remember that normal babies may have increased skin thickness.

This special FTS scan also provides other very useful information:

- Accurate dating of the pregnancy
- Fetal heart rate
- Number of fetuses present and, if twins, whether they are identical or not
- Detects obvious fetal abnormalities

It is important to remember that a screening test does not guarantee a normal baby. Therefore you should carefully compare the advantages and disadvantages of a screening test (like FTS) compared with a diagnostic test (like CVS).

Only you can decide if you wish to have an invasive diagnostic test, like CVS, and you will always have the right to choose this definitive test if you prefer. It is also recommended that you have a further scan at 20 weeks to check for other abnormalities.

Outcome of the pregnancy

Following the completion of the FTS test, you will be given an outcome form and we would be grateful if you would complete this and return it to us, when your pregnancy is finished. This information is important for us to keep track of how well our service is performing and for our continuing research in fetal medicine.

We may also need to contact you again, your GP or your hospital to obtain further details about your pregnancy and your baby's health. All such information will be treated as confidential and anonymous data may be used for our research.

If you prefer that we do not collect this information please

tick this box.

Once you have finished reading this form please sign and date below and return the form to the Women's Health Group.

• I have read the background information about First Trimester Screening, and I understand the difference between a screening and a diagnostic test

• I understand that the First Trimester Screening test provides an estimate of the chances that my baby is healthy or may have a problem like Down syndrome, but it cannot guarantee either of these outcomes

Name……..

Signature……

Date……..