

Estimation of α -Fetoprotein (AFP)

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:a-Fetoprotein (AFP)

An AFP test is a blood test that measures the level of .alpha-fetoprotein (AFP) in your blood when you are pregnant

?What is it used for

The test checks your baby's risk of having certain [birth defects](#) and [genetic problems](#), but it does not diagnose any health conditions. The test is usually done between 15 and 20 weeks .of [pregnancy](#)

AFP is a protein mostly made in your developing baby's **liver**.

Usually, some AFP passes from the baby into your blood. But certain medical conditions can make the baby's body release more or less AFP than usual. When this happens, your AFP blood levels .will be higher or lower than normal

AFP levels in men and non-pregnant women vary by age and race but typically range from 0 to 40 ng/mL. Maternal AFP levels increase during pregnancy from about the 14th week of gestation until about 32 weeks. Between 15 and 20 weeks, AFP levels .typically range between 10 and 150 ng/ml

Abnormal AFP levels may be a sign that your baby has an
:increased risk of a health problem, such as

Higher than normal AFP levels

[A neural tube defect](#), a serious condition that happens when a
.baby's brain, spine and/or spinal cord do not form properly

Lower than normal AFP levels

[Down syndrome](#), a genetic disorder that changes the way a baby's
body and brain develop. It can cause both mental and physical
.health challenges. These problems may range from mild to severe
[Edwards syndrome \(trisomy 18\)](#), an uncommon genetic condition
that causes an abnormal head shape and many organ defects. Most
.babies with this condition die in the first year of life

**Thank you for
listening**