PATIENT EDUCATION

WOMEN'S HEALTH: Chorionic Villus Sampling

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What is Chorionic Villus Sampling?

Chorionic Villus Sampling (CVS) is a test done during pregnancy to check if the baby has abnormal chromosomes or genes. It is done by removing very tiny pieces from the placenta. The placenta is an organ inside a pregnant woman's uterus responsible for supplying her fetus with nutrients and oxygen and carrying away wastes.

Why is CVS done?

CVS is done to check if the developing baby has a genetic problem like Down syndrome or other diseases. It is ordered by your gynecologist if a certain problem is suspected based on your age, family history, or in case of abnormal blood tests or ultrasounds.

When is CVS done?

This test is done between 10 and 13 weeks of pregnancy. The results are usually out in three weeks. However, there is a quick test that can give preliminary results within 24-48 hours if deemed necessary by your doctor.

Who performs CVS?

CVS is performed by a Maternal Fetal Medicine specialist at the Prenatal Diagnosis Unit at AUBMC.

Are there any special preparations for CVS?

No. It is not necessary for you to have a full bladder or to be fasting prior to the procedure. No medications are needed before or after the procedure.

How is CVS done?

The doctor will perform an ultrasound of your uterus. While looking at the ultrasound picture, the doctor will either insert a needle into your belly or a tiny tube into your vagina. Next, the doctor will guide the needle or tube into your placenta to extract tiny pieces of tissues and send them to the laboratory for assessment. At the Prenatal Diagnosis Unit at AUBMC, most of the procedures are performed through the belly.

What are the risks of CVS?

The main risk of the CVS procedure is losing the pregnancy, yet this is very rare and does not exceed 1%. Other complications include abdominal cramping, bleeding, or fluid leakage from the vagina.

Chorionic Villus Sampling (CVS)

CVS Transabdominal

Transcervical CVS

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What should I expect after CVS?

The doctor will ask you to rest for a day or two after the procedure. Call your doctor if you have:

- Bad cramping in your belly
- Bleeding from your vagina (similar to menstrual period bleeding)
- Leakage of water-like fluid from your vagina
- Fever with a temperature of more than 38°C

Is there an alternative to CVS?

An alternative to CVS is a test known as amniocentesis, which can also check for chromosomal and genetic problems in the fetus. Amniocentesis has to be done at a later stage of pregnancy, starting at 15 weeks.

Why is it important to know my blood type and Rh status?

If your blood type is Rh negative (for example: O-, A-, etc.), you will need to receive an injection after the procedure to prevent any complications.

For any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to visit or call the Prenatal Diagnosis Unit during weekdays from 8:30 am until 4:00 pm on the following number 01-350000 ext. 5620. We are here to answer all your questions.

This educational material provides general information only.
It does not constitute medical advice. Consult your health care provider to determine whether the information applies to you.

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