



The California Prenatal Screening Program

California Department of Public Health

Genetic Disease Screening Program



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The Expanded Prenatal Screening Program Is Now Available

The California Prenatal Screening Program is continuing its mission to provide high-quality prenatal screening for the women of California. The comprehensive Program now available is designed to be responsive to the large and diverse population of California and to the variety of different patient and provider circumstances.

For patients in prenatal care prior to 14 weeks, prenatal screening through the California Program can now include first trimester blood specimens (at 10 weeks – 13 weeks 6 days) and, when available, nuchal translucency (NT) ultrasound information. These can be used with second trimester blood specimens for **Serum Integrated Screening** (without NT) or **Full Integrated Screening** (with NT) as part of their prenatal screening options.

For patients in prenatal care after 14 weeks, prenatal screening can be obtained using a second trimester blood specimen (at 15 – 20 weeks) for **Quad Marker Screening** (formerly referred to as Expanded AFP Screening).

When first trimester specimens are combined with NT information, the California Program gives a first trimester risk assessment for Down syndrome and Trisomy 18. This risk will be revised with the second trimester specimen by incorporating the second trimester analytes to give an improved risk assessment for these chromosomal abnormalities. The second trimester specimen also allows risk assessments for neural tube defects and Smith-Lemli-Opitz syndrome, which are not possible in the first trimester.

These options are discussed in more detail in the **Prenatal Care Provider Handbook** and the **Patient Booklet**.

Highlights and Advantages of the California Program

- The low cost Program fee (\$162) is inclusive for both the first and/or second trimester specimens. The fee does not cover the cost of the NT ultrasound.
- The Program fee includes expedited and free prenatal diagnosis for all women with “screen positive” (high risk) results. Services may include genetic counseling, CVS, amniocentesis and consultative ultrasound.
- Regional Coordinators verify the accuracy of patient information and track the “screen positive” patients to ensure timely diagnostic services. They are also available to answer questions about the Program.
- The high level of standardization and quality control of laboratory results enhances accuracy.
- Detailed Program analysis, providing risk calculations based specifically on the California population, enhances sensitivity and effectiveness of the screening tests.

Taken together, these unique enhancements found in the California Program allow us to continue our mandate to provide high quality State-wide prenatal screening.

Clinician Education about the New Program

We believe that clinician education is vital to successfully implementing the Program expansion. The efforts at outreach and communication have included Program announcements, evening forums in major urban centers, and an online web-and-phone conference. The regional Prenatal Screening Coordinator staff has been providing in-service presentations to medical office and clinic groups in all parts of California. As of mid-April, they have provided 853 presentations serving a total of 6,550 clinicians and staff.

Looking for more information?

- **Join the Web-and-Phone Conference on Thursday, May 7, 2009** (see enclosed flyer).
- **Contact your Prenatal Screening Coordinator Office**, listed at the bottom of every result mailer.
- **Visit the Prenatal Screening Program website:** www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/pns