



This risk factor is expressed in the "1 in x" format, for example 1 in 1,000 or 1 in 300. The combination of an NTS and a blood test in determining risk provides a

90% detection rate of chromosomal abnormalities.

#### HOW DO I GET THE RESULTS?

Results are usually available soon after your examination and you can generally take your report with you. We also send a copy to your doctor and encourage you to discuss the results with them if you have any questions or concerns.

#### WHAT IF MY RESULTS SHOW INCREASED RISK?

Even if you have an increased risk factor, please keep in mind that many high risk pregnancies result in normal babies. If you are concerned, more invasive tests such as amniocentesis or chorion villus sampling (CVS) can provide you with an accurate diagnosis. Your doctor will be able to explain the benefits and risks of these procedures.



#### HOW DO I MAKE AN APPOINTMENT?

Once your doctor has written a referral you will need to contact us\* to make an appointment. Appointments can generally be made for the following day but it is important to remember that if you also require a blood test, this should be performed prior to your NTS appointment. Blood test results can take up to 5 days to be reported. To ensure your results are available for your NTS, it is advisable to request that they be sent to the NQXS practice of your choice.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

While this leaflet is designed to be as informative as possible, it is very brief in nature and should not replace the advice or guidance of your doctor or preferred healthcare professional.

<b>CAIRNS</b>	ABN 75 327 483 513
126 Mulgrave Road, Cairns, QLD 4870 *	TEL. 07 4041 3188
<b>SMITHFIELD</b>	ABN 75 327 483 513
Campus Shopping Village, Smithfield, QLD 4878	TEL. 07 4057 5800
<b>TOWNSVILLE</b>	ABN 46 097 351 016
252 Ross River Road, Aitkenvale, QLD 4814 *	All Appointments:
295 Ross River Road, Aitkenvale, QLD 4814	TEL. 07 4779 3711
531 Ross River Road, Cranbrook, QLD 4814	

\* NTS only available at these locations

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CAIRNS

SMITHFIELD

TOWNSVILLE



### WHAT IS A NUCHAL TRANSLUCENCY SCAN?

Nuchal Translucency is a small layer of fluid at the back of your baby's neck and is situated between the skin and the surrounding soft tissue. All babies have this layer of fluid but in the case of a chromosomal abnormality, the thickness of the layer tends to be increased. A Nuchal Translucency Scan (NTS) measures this thickness and is used to screen for chromosomal abnormalities, the most common of which is Down Syndrome. The procedure may also detect a major heart abnormality and/or certain structural defects.

### SHOULD I HAVE THE NTS PERFORMED?

The vast majority of babies are normal. However all women, whatever their age, have a small risk of developing a baby with impaired physical and/or mental function. In some cases,

this is caused by a chromosomal abnormality such as Down Syndrome. While the decision to have an NTS should be made in consultation with your doctor, the procedure itself is safe and non-invasive, and remains one of the most sensitive screening tests on offer today. In determining whether you need the scan, your doctor will consider factors such as your age, and any previous or family history of abnormal pregnancies.

### WHEN IS THE SCAN PERFORMED?

The nuchal translucency is only present in the early stages of your baby's development. The scan should therefore be performed while your pregnancy is between 12 and 13 weeks.

### HOW IS THE SCAN PERFORMED?

An NTS is like any other ultrasound procedure. However, the sonographer performing your examination must be accredited by the Fetal Medicine Foundation whose work established the test and maintains the strict standard by which the scan should be carried out.

During the scan, images are acquired using soundwaves that carry no risk to yourself or your unborn child. In the majority of cases NTS images are obtained externally. A layer of gel is spread over your belly before a probe is massaged over the area to obtain the required images. In very rare cases, we may also require an internal scan to obtain the best possible images. This involves placing a small probe into your vagina and is not harmful to the pregnancy. To increase the accuracy of the NTS, it is usually performed in conjunction with a blood test known as 'first trimester serum biochemistry'. This blood test is used to measure the levels of two hormones: (1) free  $\beta$ -hCG and (2) PAPP-A. In pregnancies affected by Down Syndrome there is a tendency for the levels of free  $\beta$ -hCG to be increased and PAPP-A to be decreased.



If available, the results from your blood test will be combined with the results of your NTS, together with other factors such as your age, to generate a risk factor for your pregnancy.



We recommend booking a second scan when your pregnancy is between 18 and 20 weeks as this is the ideal time to check your baby in more detail. At this scan we will examine your baby's heart, face, brain, spine, internal organs and limbs.

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