

Information for women after ultrasound detection of polyhydramnios



The aim of this leaflet is to provide you with more information where your ultrasound scan has shown that the fluid level around your baby is increased.

What is polyhydramnios?

Polyhydramnios is a condition where the amniotic fluid surrounding your baby is increased during pregnancy.

What is amniotic fluid?

Amniotic fluid is made up of fluid which is nearly all from fetal urine production after the first 12 weeks of gestation.

The fluid cushions your baby and allows your baby to move which aids muscle and bone development. The fluid is swallowed by your baby, absorbed, and then passed out again as urine, helping the lungs and digestive system to develop.

In some cases, there may be too much or too little fluid. When there is too much fluid, it is called polyhydramnios.

What causes polyhydramnios?

The cause of polyhydramnios is not known for four in every five cases.

Polyhydramnios can be caused by a reduced fetal swallowing and absorption or an increase in fetal urination. Reduced fetal swallowing/absorption can be related to a bowel blockage. An increased urine production can be linked sometimes with the mother developing diabetes during pregnancy (gestational diabetes).

Polyhydramnios can be classed as mild, moderate or severe depending on the amount of amniotic fluid volume that is found during your ultrasound scan.

What happens next?

Amniotic Fluid Index (AFI) is the term used to estimate the amount of amniotic fluid around your baby.

If the AFI is above the normal levels, the sonographer (a healthcare worker who specialises in ultrasound imaging) will assess your baby's stomach, kidneys and bladder to exclude any major problem.

You will be also offered a blood test called a random glucose test to exclude gestational diabetes. The sonographer will also arrange an appointment to see your consultant within 7-10 days to review your scan and blood test results.

If the level of the AFI is very high (severe polyhydramnios), a further detailed scan will be arranged for you in the Fetal Medicine Unit, in addition to the random glucose test and consultant appointment as above.

If your glucose test result is normal, you will be followed up by your consultant and your baby will be reviewed after birth by the neonatal team (to check the swallowing of the baby).

If your glucose test result is abnormal (i.e. high level of glucose in your blood), we will organise further test to assess if you have developed gestational diabetes.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the findings, please contact the fetal medicine midwives on **020 71882321** (Mon-Fri, 9am to 5pm) or contact the Antenatal Day Unit (ADU) on **02071881723** (Monday to Sunday 8am to 8pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, and to become a member:

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

Leaflet number: 4178/VER1

Date published: November 2015

Review date: November 2018

© 2015 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust