How will I get my results?
The fetal medicine midwife or genetics team will contact you with results. These arrangements should be confirmed on the day of the test.

If the results are abnormal, you will be asked to consider ending your pregnancy. You and your partner will have time to ask questions before making a decision. We will support you whatever choice you make.

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Chorionic villus sampling (CVS)
This leaflet explains why and how CVS is done. If you have any further questions, please speak to a member of staff caring for you.
Introduction
There are limitations and benefits to consider before having CVS. Please ask your questions before deciding what to do.

Why is CVS offered?
CVS is a series of tests offered in the first trimester of pregnancy. A small sample of tissue is taken from the edge of the placenta using a needle. This is used to confirm or exclude a genetic or chromosome problem in a pregnancy.

CVS may be offered to you if:
- prenatal screening shows there is an increased chance of a chromosome problem such as Down’s syndrome
- an ultrasound scan identifies a problem that may be diagnosed by further testing
- there is a family history of a chromosome problem or a known genetic condition.

Having prenatal testing is your choice. Some women decide to have testing and some choose not to.

How is CVS done?
CVS is done by a fetal medicine doctor and takes a few minutes. You will need to wear comfortable clothes – a top and trousers/skirt. You will not need a full bladder. Your partner or a friend may stay with you.

First, a scan is done to look at the position of the baby and placenta. This helps guide the needle into your womb. You will have an injection of anaesthetic (lignocaine) to numb your skin.

You will feel pressure on the abdomen as the needle goes in. Most women say this feels uncomfortable, rather than painful.

Sometimes, due to the presence of fibroids or the position, location and size of the placenta, CVS may not be possible. In this case the FMU consultant will discuss other option or may re-schedule the procedure for a later date.

What tests are done?
The rapid test to look for Down’s syndrome, Patau syndrome, or Edward syndrome is done at our regional laboratory. It takes 1-3 days. In the South East Thames region, a test called a prenatal array CGH (comparative genomic hybridization) is offered if needed, and takes two weeks. The sex of the baby may be checked, but only if this is necessary for diagnosis. All results will be given to you.

If you are having a gene test, it may be done at another laboratory. The waiting time for results depends on the specific test.

What is the accuracy?
CVS gives a clear result most of the time. If a result is not clear, a different test may be suggested. Not all problems can be identified. Any baby has a three in 100 (3%) chance of being born with a significant medical or developmental problem.

What is the risk?
We know that 1 in 100 (1%) women will miscarry following CVS. We do not know why this happens or who it will affect. CVS does not cause birth defects or harm the pregnant woman. Less than 1 in 1,000 women will have an infection related to CVS. Please ask for more information if you are having twins.

What happens afterwards?
People whose blood is rhesus (Rh) positive have D antigen (a protein) on the surface of their red blood cells. Rh negative people do not.

A woman with Rh negative blood in pregnancy can be pregnant with a Rh positive baby if the baby’s father is Rh positive. If any of the baby’s blood enters the woman’s bloodstream during the birth, the woman’s immune system can develop antibodies (infection-fighting proteins) against the rhesus antigens. This is known as sensitisation. If you are Rh negative, you will need an anti-D antibody injection after CVS.

You will be asked to rest in the clinic for a few minutes. Try to avoid heavy lifting for 1-2 days.

Most women have no problems, but you might have a bruise, spotting or cramping. If you do, paracetamol is safe to take. If you have persistent pain, leaking, bleeding or a high temperature, please call your midwife or go to the hospital.
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