Nuchal Translucency Screening

The purpose of the first trimester screening is to help detect infants with Down syndrome and also one of the other Trisomies. This is done at approximately 12 weeks. It involves a blood sample as well as a first trimester ultrasound to assess the thickness of the fold behind the neck. Based on these results, a number will be given as to the risk of each of the above trisomies.

When the number given is a higher sensitivity (meaning a higher likelihood to pick up abnormalities if present – at least 80%) with the same if not lower false positive rate (5%) as opposed to second trimester screening. The false positive rate means that 5% of people getting the test will be told that it is abnormal when the baby is really okay. The first trimester screen does not assess for neural tube defects or abdominal wall defects.

If the first trimester neck thickness is thick, it can also mean that the baby is at increased risk of a heart defect.

We are learning more and trying to modify our screening tests. Often times, the first trimester screen can be put with the second trimester blood test to get an over 92% sensitivity with about a 3% false positive rate. Patents are pending, however which makes this a bit difficult.

The American College of OB/GYNs has recommended that all pregnant women be offered the first trimester screen. Insurance companies however have lagged in their coverage. As time continues, hopefully more companies will go with the college’s recommendations. Before getting the test, please call your insurance company and inquire about coverage as our office cannot guarantee this coverage. This ICD-9 codes your insurance company will request are:

- 76801 Ultrasound $221.00
- 76813 Ultrasound for measurements $175.00
- 84702 Lab work - Billed by NTD Labs
- 84163 Lab work - Billed by NTD Labs

By signing below, this means that you have read and understand the above.

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Name          Date