

# TASMANIAN MATERNAL SERUM ANTENATAL SCREENING PROGRAMME

Department of Chemical Pathology,  
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## Update 9 ~ October 2001

## Welcome to first trimester screening

Following lengthy evaluation of serum biochemistry and nuchal translucency data collected on South Australian and Tasmanian pregnancies between 10 and 14 weeks gestation, SAMSAS is now pleased to be able to deliver assessment of **risk of fetal Down syndrome in first trimester** based on local Australian data linked to ASUM standards.

Screening for fetal chromosomal disorders in first trimester is best performed by combining **serum biochemistry and ultrasound** results. Together these measurements produce a significant increase in detection of affected pregnancies at low false positive rates. Ultrasound practices across Tasmania and South Australia are working with SAMSAS to provide this combined first trimester screening service. The locations of the **Tasmanian practices** appear at the end of this newsletter.

**Second trimester screening** of pregnancies for fetal Down syndrome and neural tube defects **remains in place** and can still be requested as before. We recommend, however, that if a pregnancy is screened in first trimester then any request for second trimester maternal serum screening be confined to **NTD screening only**. First trimester screening does not include detection of fetal NTDs.

## Requesting first trimester screening

As soon as a patient decides she wants the screening test, arrange for the ultrasound and blood measurements. **Two request forms are required**, one for the blood analysis and one for the ultrasound scan;

### BLOOD ANALYSIS

1. 5-10 mL clotted blood sample is required, taken, between 10 and 13 weeks gestation. A list of collection centres is provided on the reverse of the SAMSAS request form;
2. Use a SAMSAS request form (telephone (08) 8161 7285 if you require some of these, or download one from the website [www.chempathadelaide.com/samsas](http://www.chempathadelaide.com/samsas)). If you use your regular pathology request form specify "send to WCH Adelaide".
  - (a) the test request is "**first trimester screen**";
  - (b) complete the gestational age information (weeks+days and date estimated);
  - (c) specify the ultrasound practice performing the nuchal translucency scan;
  - (d) ask **patient to sign permission for SAMSAS to receive copies of their reports**, stickers for this are provided by SAMSAS. Please fix to request form, top left or bottom middle.
  - (e) send the blood specimen to Women's and Children's Hospital. Your usual pathology specimen arrangements can be used;
  - (f) give the patient the SAMSAS pre-test information booklet.

## ULTRASOUND

3. Book a nuchal translucency scan (see attached list of addresses where this can be done). The fetus must be between **11+ and 13+ weeks** gestation at the time of the scan;
4. Complete an ultrasound request form, specifying “**risk of fetal abnormality**”;
5. Ask **patient to sign permission for SAMSAS to receive copies of their reports**, stickers for this are provided by SAMSAS, please fix to request form.

SAMSAS will coordinate the results with the ultrasound practice and you will receive a single report giving the risks calculated for the pregnancy. Post-test information booklets are provided with all reports issued by SAMSAS on pregnancies found at increased risk of fetal abnormality. The same information is available on the SAMSAS website [www.chempathadelaide.com/samsas](http://www.chempathadelaide.com/samsas).

## Availability of first trimester screening

Combined ultrasound+biochemistry screening is not at present offered through all hospitals/clinics. Check with the hospital/clinic concerned. The ultrasound practices currently coordinated with the SAMSAS Programme are listed on the attached sheet. Those locations marked \* are staffed by a sonographer accredited by the Fetal Medicine Foundation (FMF) UK for the performance of first trimester nuchal translucency scans.

## Costs

For privately insured patients SAMSAS continues its policy of accepting ‘Medicare only’ for the serum biochemistry analyses. There may be a gap payment for the ultrasound measurement. Check with the practice providing this service.

## Change of telephone number

Our new numbers are:            **telephone: (08) 8161 7285**            **fax: (08) 8161 8085**

Our e-mail [samsas@wch.sa.gov.au](mailto:samsas@wch.sa.gov.au) and website [www.chempathadelaide.com/samsas](http://www.chempathadelaide.com/samsas) remain the same.

**Robert Cocciolone,**

on behalf of the South Australian Maternal Serum Antenatal Screening (SAMSAS) Programme

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### Gestational Age Windows for Antenatal Screening for Birth Defects

First Trimester	Blood sample 10w0d – 13w6d	Ultrasound 11w0d – 13w6d
Second Trimester	Blood sample 14w0d – 20w6d (optimal time 16w0d – 18w6d)	

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## Locations for the provision of First Trimester Nuchal Translucency scans in association with SAMSAS

BURNIE	<b>Northern Imaging Group,</b> North West Private Hospital, Brickport Rd, 03 6431 6433
HOBART	<b>Royal Hobart Hospital*</b> , 48 Liverpool Street, 03 6222 8343 <b>Rush Taylor &amp; Partners*</b> , 176 Macquarie St, 03 6233 1411 <b>Hobart Private Hospital</b> , 03 6214 3011
LATROBE	Mayne Health Diagnostic Imaging, Cnr Argyle & Collins St, <b>Northern Imaging Group,</b> Mersey Community Hospital, Torquay Rd, 03 6426 5440
LAUNCESTON	<b>Launceston Ultrasound for Women*</b> , 03 6331 3999 Suite 7, 7 High Street <b>Launceston General Hospital</b> , Charles Street, 03 6348 7085 <b>Northern Imaging Group,</b> St. Vincents Hospital, 5 Frederick St., 03 6336 6336
LENAH VALLEY	<b>Rush Taylor &amp; Partners*</b> , Calvary Hospital, 49 Augusta Rd, 03 6233 1733

\* Centres staffed by a sonographer accredited by the Fetal Medicine Foundation (FMF) UK for the performance of first trimester nuchal translucency scans.

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