

What is QF-PCR?

QF-PCR is a very quick test that can usually give a result in about 24-48 hours. It is used to check how many copies of chromosomes 13, 18 and 21 a pregnancy has. It is accurate when it picks up a problem but it cannot pick up all types of chromosome problem, and it does not look at other chromosomes.

What are Chromosomes?

Chromosomes are the bundles of genetic material that are present in all of the cells in a person's body. There are usually two copies of each chromosome and these pairs of chromosomes are numbered from number 1, which is the largest pair, to number 22, which is the smallest pair. There is a 23rd pair, and in males this pair is made up of one X and one Y chromosome. In females this pair is made up of two X chromosomes.

Chromosomes contain the instructions, known as genes, that tell our bodies how to grow and develop. It is very important that we have the right amount of chromosomal material as too much or too little can cause very major problems with the development of a pregnancy. Sometimes these problems are so severe that a pregnancy will end in a miscarriage, but sometimes a baby can be born who has developmental problems because of their chromosome pattern.

What samples are needed to do the test?

QF-PCR can be done on a sample from a CVS (Chorionic Villus Sample) or an Amniocentesis. These are both ways of getting a sample of the baby's tissue when there are concerns about a pregnancy. QF-PCR may be one of a number of tests that are being considered if there are concerns about your pregnancy. Your specialist Doctor or Midwife should be able to talk to you about these tests and why they are being considered.

Blood samples from the mother, and in some cases the father, are usually taken at the same time as the amniocentesis or CVS. These can be used to help interpret the results of the test.

What might the results show and when will they be ready?

QF-PCR is very accurate when it picks up a problem with the chromosomes it is looking at. If it finds a problem with one of the chromosomes this may give an explanation for the concerns there have been about your pregnancy.

Results usually take about 24-48 hrs and your specialist Doctor or Midwife will contact you when they are ready.

Support Organisations

ARC (Antenatal Results and Choices) is a charity that supports people through testing in pregnancy. They have a really helpful website.

www.arc-uk.org

Tel 0845 077 2290
or 0207 713 7486 via mobile
Email: info@arc-uk.org

Local contacts

Your local Genetics service:

SE of Scotland Clinical Genetic Services
Western General Hospital,
Crewe Road,
Edinburgh,
EH4 2XU.

Telephone: 0131 537 1116
Email:
wgh.clinicalgenetics@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk



QF-PCR (Quantitative Fluorescent-Polymerase Chain Reaction) testing in pregnancy

This leaflet is written for people who have been offered QF-PCR testing during a pregnancy.

