

Patient information

Echogenic bowel identified at anomaly scan

What is echogenic bowel?

You have received this information leaflet as, during your ultrasound examination, your baby has been found to have an echogenic bowel. This term is used when the bowel appears brighter on ultrasound than normal.

What does this mean?

In most cases, the cause of echogenic bowel is never found, and it often resolves itself during the pregnancy.

However, there are some recognised causes of echogenic bowel. These include:

- The baby swallowing some blood contained within the amniotic fluid if you experienced a bleed earlier in pregnancy (you may not even have noticed this). This is not harmful to the baby.
- Infection: You will be offered a blood test to see if you have recently acquired any of the associated infections. You may not have had any symptoms of an infection.
- A condition called cystic fibrosis (CF): This is an inherited disorder which causes mucous to build up in the lungs and digestive system. It is an inherited condition that requires lifelong treatment. Both parents will be offered a blood test to see if either of you are carriers of the CF gene. If either of you are found to be carriers, then further investigations will be offered at that point.
- Echogenic bowel can very occasionally be associated with a chromosomal condition such as Down's syndrome. You may or may not have decided to have the initial screening for chromosomal conditions but regardless of this decision/result

you may wish to know for certain whether your baby has a chromosomal condition. This would involve a diagnostic test called an amniocentesis. This test does carry a 0.5% chance of miscarriage. The option for this test will be discussed with you in further detail by a doctor at the Fetal Medicine Unit (FMU).

[View information about CVS and amniocentesis diagnostic tests – GOV UK](#)

However, in most cases there is no cause, and it resolves during the pregnancy.

What happens now?

You will be offered referral to a local Fetal Medicine Unit. This will be at either the Rosie Maternity Hospital at Addenbrooke's in Cambridge or at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital.

Once we have sent your referral, this is day zero. The FMU team will review your referral and contact you by telephone to arrange an appointment; this may show as a blocked telephone number. You will usually be seen within five days of referral.

You will be seen by a fetal medicine consultant, who will perform a more in-depth ultrasound scan of your baby. They will discuss the additional tests with you and depending on the findings of the scan/tests they will plan your ongoing care with you alongside the antenatal and newborn screening midwives at West Suffolk Hospital.

Many babies with echogenic bowel identified on scan do not have any health conditions.

If you, your partner, or family have any further questions or queries, please do contact the antenatal and newborn screening midwives. We understand this can be a worrying time and are here to support you.

Useful information

[Antenatal Results and Choices \(ARC\)](#)

Information about chromosomal conditions and diagnostic testing which may be offered at a fetal medicine unit: [Screening in pregnancy information leaflets - GOV.UK](#)

Contact details

If you have any further questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact the antenatal and newborn screening midwives, we understand this can be a worrying time.

Telephone: 01284 712567

Or email: ANNBscreening@wsh.nhs.uk

Clinical research

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is actively involved in clinical research. Your doctor, clinical team or the research and development department may contact you regarding specific clinical research studies that you might be interested in participating in. If you do not wish to be contacted for these purposes, please email info.gov@wsh.nsh.uk. This will in no way affect the care or treatment you receive.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities, please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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