

Routine pregnancy testing before a planned operation/procedure

This leaflet will answer some of your questions about having a routine pregnancy test before your operation/procedure. It explains why it is necessary for all female patients who are 12 years old and above. If you have any questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

Why you need a pregnancy test before your operation/procedure

All females who are old enough to have children need to have a pregnancy test before they have an operation or surgical procedure.

This is an important part of preparing you for surgery. Knowing if you are pregnant reduces the risk of harm to you and a potential pregnancy. Pre-surgery pregnancy testing is advised by the National Institute for Care and Health Excellence (NICE) who give hospitals guidance on how to provide the best patient care.

The benefits of pregnancy testing

Your body changes, even in early pregnancy, and can alter the decision to perform surgery or undertake a surgical procedure, and how it is done. This is for your safety and that of a possible pregnancy.

If the test shows that you are pregnant, the risks and benefits of your operation or procedure will be discussed with you, taking this information in to account. Operations and procedures may be delayed, or the anaesthetic and the way the operation is done might be changed, if necessary.

In emergency situations, pregnancy testing will not delay your treatment. The potential risks and benefits of proceeding with surgery without knowing the result will be assessed by your medical team and discussed with you.

The risks of an undetected pregnancy during an operation

Although very rare, incidents have been reported where miscarriage (losing the baby) has happened after surgery.

Asking for your consent

We want to involve you in all the decisions about your care and treatment. The staff will ask for your consent to do a pregnancy test. If you decline a pregnancy test, your team will try to make sure that you understand the risks to you or a potential. If you do not allow a pregnancy test to be done, we may have to cancel your surgery/procedure (the doctors will talk to you about this). The doctors and nurses looking after you will try and answer any concerns you have about having the test.

What happens during pre-operation pregnancy testing?

A small sample of your urine (pee) will be used for the pregnancy test. The test will be done by one of the nurses looking after you.

The pregnancy testing kits used at Evelina London have a proven accuracy of over 99 out of 100 patients. Some medicines can affect the reliability of the pregnancy test, and a different test by the pathology laboratory at the hospital may be needed to confirm results. If a laboratory test is required, this will be a blood test.

What happens if the result is positive?

If the test result is positive, you will be able to discuss this with your nurse or doctor. A decision about how to proceed with surgery that is the best approach for you and the pregnancy will be made by you and your medical team. It might be best for you and the pregnancy if the surgery is delayed or cancelled. This decision may also involve your family. The staff will support you and can direct you to expert advice and help about what to do next.

Who you can contact for more information

If you have any worries, questions or concerns about anything you have read in this leaflet, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

Useful sources of information

NHS website, gives support and advice for teenage pregnancy, and information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing, **web:** www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/support/teenage-pregnancy/

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

tel: 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am-5pm, **email:** letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), **tel:** 020 7188 8801, **email:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk. To make a complaint, contact the complaints department, **tel:** 020 7188 3514, **email:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch, **tel:** 020 7188 8815, **email:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

This service offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day, **tel:** 111, **web:** www.111.nhs.uk

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