

# Fetal Fibronectin Test

You are weeks from your baby's due date, but you are having cramping or contractions of your uterus. It is often hard to tell if these contractions are preterm labor.

Your health care provider has ordered a test for fetal fibronectin (fFN). This test can help tell if the contractions are the kind that can cause your baby to be born early.

## What is Fetal Fibronectin?

Fetal fibronectin (fy-bro-neck-tin) is a glue-like substance that connects the amniotic sac around your baby to the inner wall of your uterus.

Contractions can cause fFN to be released. When this happens, fFN can be found in the vaginal discharge. If you are between the 23rd and 34th weeks of pregnancy and your health care provider finds fFN, this can be a sign that your baby could be born too early.

## How is the Fetal Fibronectin Test Done?

Your health care provider will gently insert a speculum into your vagina. They will use a special swab to take a sample of the discharge (like during a Pap test).

The sample is sent to a lab for testing. Test results are usually ready within 2 hours of when the lab receives the sample.

This test is completely safe and has no risks.

**Your Clinic Phone Number**

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**Your Hospital's Birth Center  
Phone Number**

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**It is important to tell your health care provider if you have had sexual intercourse or have douched in the last 24 hours. These activities can make the test results inaccurate.**

## What Do the Test Results Mean?

If the fFN test results are negative and there are no other signs of preterm labor (such as thinning or opening of the cervix), it is unlikely (99.2 percent) that your baby will be born in the next two weeks. Knowing the test is negative can help your health care provider avoid prescribing medicine you don't need or admitting you to the hospital.

If the test is positive, there is a higher chance (up to 40 percent) that your baby could be born in the next two weeks. Your health care provider may put you on bed rest, medicine or both to help stop the contractions.

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## When Should You Call Your Health Care Provider After You Go Home?

Even when the fFN test is negative, do not ignore future contractions. It is important that you tell your health care provider of any possible signs of preterm labor.

Call your health care provider or your hospital's Birth Center right away if you have any of the following signs.

Tell the person who answers the phone,  
"My baby isn't due until \_\_\_\_\_  
and I am having these symptoms \_\_\_\_\_."

Preterm labor symptoms include:

- change or increase in vaginal discharge
- bleeding from your vagina
- a sudden gush or leak of fluid from your vagina
- a regular pattern of 6 or more contractions in 1 hour
- menstrual-like cramps for more than 1 hour
- tightening of the abdomen
- increased pelvic pressure for more than 1 hour
- intestinal cramping with or without diarrhea or indigestion for more than 1 hour
- throbbing in the vagina, cramps in the thighs, or feeling your baby is pushing down
- a feeling that things are not right.

## Other Instructions