



Fetal Fibronectin Testing: Implications for a Positive Result

What is fetal fibronectin?

Fetal fibronectin is a “glue-like” protein that bonds the baby to the uterus. Fetal fibronectin is detectable in the vagina in the very beginning of pregnancy, when this bond is first forming, and then again at the end of pregnancy, when your body is getting ready to deliver your baby.

Your fetal fibronectin test result is positive – now what?

A positive test result means that your body is leaking fetal fibronectin, a sign that your body may be getting ready to deliver your baby. There is an increased chance that your baby is going to arrive early – but not everyone with a positive test result delivers early. The test can be repeated as often as every two weeks (*from weeks 22 to 35*) to monitor your ongoing risk.

Developing a plan of action.

Knowing this information will help you and your healthcare provider prepare for a possible preterm birth and take appropriate steps to manage your pregnancy.

Depending on what week of pregnancy you are in, some recommendations your healthcare provider may suggest include:

- Limiting activities
- Reducing stress
- Bed rest
- Finding and treating any undiagnosed infection
- Watching for cervical changes that would signal onset of labor
- Consulting with a high-risk pregnancy specialist
- Tocolytic drugs, which are used to alleviate preterm contractions
- Corticosteroids, which may aid in the baby’s lung development
- Monitoring for other symptoms that may be indicative of preterm labor
- Additional intervention when and if preterm labor begins

The more you know, the more you can prepare.

Knowing there is a risk of preterm delivery gives you the chance to make personal and practical preparations at home with your family:

- Rest, as directed by your healthcare provider.
- Dismiss any feelings of guilt you may have about taking care of yourself. This is not self-indulgence – it’s doing the right thing for your baby.
- Prepare your support system. Ask for help from your family and friends, and plan ahead for any support that you might need to keep the household running and keep your other children cared for.
- Be ready for delivery (*pack a bag, plan transportation*).
- Make sure you have everything you’ll need when you bring the baby home.

Follow your healthcare provider’s advice and take it easy. Your #1 priority is taking care of your baby – and doing everything you can for your baby throughout your pregnancy.

Be sure you know the symptoms of preterm labor.¹

Contact your healthcare provider if you have any of the symptoms of preterm labor, which can include:

- Contractions (*your abdomen tightens like a fist*) every 10 minutes or more often.
- Change in vaginal discharge (*leaking fluid or bleeding from your vagina*).
- Pelvic pressure—the feeling that your baby is pushing down.
- Low, dull backache.
- Cramps that feel like your period.
- Abdominal cramps with or without diarrhea.

Notes: _____

1. www.marchofdimes.com/prematurity/21239_5809.asp.