

Cell-Free DNA (cfDNA) Screening Result

No Fetal Sex

Your recent blood test to screen for chromosome conditions shows that:
cfDNA screening is unable to report fetal sex

The main purpose of cfDNA is to screen for 3 chromosome conditions: Down syndrome, trisomy 18, and trisomy 13. Your test result shows that your pregnancy is at very low risk for these 3 conditions.

You may have asked to include fetal sex in your result, but a result is not always possible. To predict fetal sex, cfDNA checks for the presence or absence of a Y chromosome in the sample. Unfortunately, a small number of samples are not able to predict fetal sex.

Did you know?

- There are two different sex chromosomes: the X chromosome and the Y chromosome.
- Babies with a Y chromosome typically develop as a male. Babies without a Y chromosome typically develop as female.
- Most males have one X and one Y chromosome (XY). Most females have two X chromosomes (XX).

Why was the fetal sex not reported? The Y chromosome is much smaller than any of the other chromosomes being studied. The smaller size means there is less “Y” DNA to examine at the lab. This can make it hard to confirm the presence or absence of the Y chromosome. The lab is careful to report fetal sex only if the result is very clear and can give a reliable result.

Does this mean there is a problem with the baby?

This is not a sign of a problem. This is just a limitation of this type of screening test.

Can I take the test again? No. Repeat testing will not give a reliable result about the fetal sex. For this reason, we do not offer to do the test again.

How can I find out the fetal sex?

Ultrasound is routinely done during pregnancy and is often able to predict fetal sex. Most people are scheduled for an ultrasound between 18 to 22 weeks. You can ask to find out the fetal sex at this ultrasound.

You could also have a test like chorionic villus sampling (CVS) or amniocentesis. These tests study the baby’s chromosomes and accurately reports fetal sex. These tests can also find chromosome conditions not included in cfDNA screening. The decision to have additional testing will depend on the details of your pregnancy and the questions you want answered. You may want to discuss this with your OB provider.