

SPECIAL TESTS FOR MONITORING FETAL HEALTH

Many tests may be used to check on the well-being of your baby during pregnancy. Most of the time, these tests help assure you and your doctor all is going well. If problems arise, these tests can help alert your doctor that you and your baby may need special care. This pamphlet will explain:

- Special techniques used to monitor your baby
- Who may be monitored
- How these tests are done:
 - 1) Fetal Kick cts. 28 t
 - 2) Ultrasound
 - 3) Nonstress Test
 - 4) Amniotic Fluid Index (AFI)
 - 5) Biophysical Profile

Nonstress Test

- The nonstress test measures the heart rate of the fetus in response to its own movements. Usually the baby's heart beats faster when he or she moves. Such changes in the fetal heart rate are believed to be a sign of good health.
- For this test, a special device is placed on your abdomen and the fetal heart rate is measured. This test may be done on your abdomen and the fetal heart rate is measured. This test may be done in the doctor's office or in a hospital. It usually takes between 10 and 40 minutes.
- If you baby does not move for a while during the nonstress test, he or she may just be asleep. Your doctor may suggest you have something to eat or drink to make the baby active. A buzzer-like device may also be used to wake the baby and cause movement.

Biophysical Profile and Amniotic Fluid Index

- In some cases, a combination of the nonstress test and an ultrasound exam may be done. This test is called a biophysical profile. It checks fetal well-being in these five areas:
 - 1. Variation of fetal heart rate (the nonstress test)
 - 2. Breathing movements (movements of the baby's chest)
 - 3. Body movements (any significant movements of the baby)
 - 4. Muscle tone (quick, jerky movements of hands or feet)
 - 5. Amount of amniotic fluid (too little or too much may signal a problem)
- In addition to the nonstress test results, the doctor uses ultrasound to measure the amniotic fluid and to see how often the fetus breathes, moves, and flexes muscles during a 30-minute period. Each of the five

- areas is given to a score of 0 or 2 points, for a possible total of 10 points. A score of 8 or 10 is normal.
- In measuring the amount of amniotic fluid, your doctor may use the term “amniotic fluid index” or AFI. For this test, ultrasound is used to measure the depth of the amniotic fluid in four different areas of your uterus. The sum of these measurements is the AFI. A normal AFI is 5-20 centimeters. Sometimes a modified biophysical profile, which includes a nonstress test and amniotic fluid assessment, is performed.
 - A biophysical profile does not cause any harm to the fetus. If the results are normal (a score of 8 or 10), it is most often repeated weekly. In some cases, it will be repeated more often. If the results are abnormal, this may mean that additional tests are needed or, in some cases, that the baby needs to be delivered. It can be repeated, if needed, at various times to check the well-being of the fetus. The score will help you decide whether you need special care or whether your baby should be delivered sooner than planned.

Finally...

- Although no test is 100% accurate, testing can reassure you and your doctor that all is going well with your baby. If there is a problem, tests may help your doctor find it and treat it. Keep in mind that tests cannot always find a problem, or the results may say there is a problem when there isn't one. Results of your test may mean that your baby will need special care during pregnancy. This will help keep you and your baby as healthy as possible.

* Please see brochure in link