

# Vesicocentesis

Patient Information Series – What you should know, what you should ask.

## What is Vesicocentesis?

During pregnancy, doctors use special techniques to check the baby's health and see if there are any concerns. Vesicocentesis is a safe and simple procedure used to investigate your unborn baby's kidney and bladder function, the need or specialized treatment and/or to assess the baby's genetic make-up. With vesicocentesis, using a needle under ultrasound guidance, a small amount of urine is taken from the baby's bladder in order to examine fetal urine. This test helps doctors know how your baby is doing and if everything is going well with the pregnancy.

## Why is Vesicocentesis performed?

The doctor looking after you will discuss the reasons for offering this test. It's usually done when there's a concern that the baby might have a blockage in the urinary tract, which is the system that makes and passes urine. This blockage can be due to different reasons and can affect the baby's health.

*Here are the main reasons why doctors might do this test:*

- *To Check the Baby's Bladder:* By taking a little bit of urine from the baby's bladder, doctors can learn a lot about the baby's health. For example, they can see how quickly the bladder fills up again, which gives them important clues.
- *To Understand the Baby's Health Better:* The test can show if the baby's kidneys are working right and if the baby is at risk for lung problems after birth.
- *To Decide on Treatment:* Sometimes, the test helps doctors decide if the baby might need treatment even before birth, like placement of a hollow tube or "shunt" into the bladder and amniotic cavity or a special procedure with a camera to help the baby pee normally.
- *For Genetic Testing:* In some cases, the test can also help check the baby's genes to make sure everything is okay, without needing to take extra samples from the placenta.

## What to know before Vesicocentesis?

Before having a vesicocentesis, your doctor will talk to you in detail about the procedure. They will explain why it's being done and what benefits it can offer, as well as any risks involved. It's important to know that while the doctors are very experienced, there is a small risk involved with the procedure. The procedure related risk of miscarriage will be higher than for an amniocentesis but lower than for a fetal blood sample.

## What should I expect during the procedure?

Most often this procedure is performed with the mother awake. Pain relief will be provided. As it involves a small needle then local anaesthetic may be the only thing required. This means the insertion of the needle into the abdomen is much more comfortable but you should still expect a sharp and cramping sensation when the needle enters the uterus (womb). Sometimes your doctor will recommend you have sedation and additional pain relief from the anesthetics team. This would all be discussed with you in advance of the procedure.

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## **What should I expect after the procedure?**

After the procedure, patients may feel some mild discomfort or the urge to urinate. Very often a follow up scan will be done before you leave the department. The doctor will give instructions on the follow-up care needed. There might be mild bruising or soreness at the puncture site afterward, and the doctor will offer instructions for any additional care required including problems to look out for such as vaginal bleeding or fluid leaking from the vagina.

## **Is there any Follow-up appointment?**

Yes, and It's important to attend your appointments as advised by your doctor. This allows you to talk to your healthcare provider about the results of your procedure and any next steps or treatments that might be needed.

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