

*North Carolina Women's Hospital*

# Choroid Plexus Cysts

## What is a choroid plexus cyst?

The choroid plexus is the area of the brain that makes the spinal fluid that surrounds the brain and spinal cord. There are two of these areas in the brain, one on either side. This is not an area of the brain that is involved in thinking.

Once in a while a cyst forms inside the choroid plexus and is called a “choroid plexus cyst” or a “CP cyst”. Cysts can be found on one side or on both sides and they come in many different sizes.

A choroid plexus cyst does NOT cause learning problems or mental retardation and are not cancer. Although it can be scary to hear the two words “cyst” and “brain” in the same sentence, these cysts are not known to cause any problems for a baby.

## How common are these?

Choroid plexus cysts are seen in approximately 1% (1 in 100) of all second or third trimester ultrasounds. They usually disappear during the third trimester but they don't always. It doesn't make any difference if they disappear or not. These cysts can also be found in adult brains and go unnoticed during our lifetime.

## Why is this important?

If mothers have other risk factors, a choroid plexus cyst may suggest that the baby has a higher chance of having a chromosome change such as Trisomy 18. In cases like this, more testing will be offered to you.

Trisomy 18 is a very serious medical condition caused by an extra copy of chromosome #18. Most babies born with Trisomy 18 cannot survive long term.

## What should I do now? (Provider, please check appropriate box)

**Low Risk**

- In most pregnancies, this finding does NOT increase the chances of a chromosome change enough to be a reason for more testing such as amniocentesis.
- Today, a very detailed ultrasound was performed to look for anything else that would make us concerned about a chromosome change in your baby. Nothing else was found.

\*If we were not able to clearly see all parts of your baby's body on the ultrasound, you may be asked to come back for another ultrasound later in your pregnancy.

**Your ultrasound showed other reasons to be concerned about your baby**

- Your doctor and genetic counselor will explain to you what the ultrasound showed.
- You have the option of having amniocentesis today to determine for sure if your baby has a chromosome change.

**You will be at least 35 years of age on your due date**

- We know that the chance of having a baby with a chromosome change increases in older mothers. Your genetic counselor has (or will) discussed these risks with you already.
- You have the option of having amniocentesis today to determine for sure if your baby has a chromosome change.
- If you are not sure if you should have amniocentesis, you may want to discuss maternal serum screening with your genetic counselor or doctor today. This screening may help give you more information about the chances of a chromosome change and help you decide if amniocentesis is right for you.

**You had a maternal serum screen that showed a higher chance for Trisomy 18 or for Down Syndrome**

- You have the option of having amniocentesis today to determine for sure if your baby has a chromosome change.

\* If you have not yet had a maternal serum screen, or do not know the results, please speak with your doctor or other health care provider.

### **What is amniocentesis?**

Amniocentesis is a procedure that can test to see if your baby has the correct number of chromosomes. Using ultrasound, the doctor passes a thin needle through your abdomen into the sac of fluid that surrounds the baby (amniotic fluid). Skin cells that the baby sheds into this fluid are used to study the number of chromosomes present. Results of an amniocentesis take about two weeks and are very accurate.

The chance of a complication from having an amniocentesis (such as leakage of amniotic fluid, bleeding, significant cramping, infection, or miscarriage) is approximately 0.5% or 1 in 200 times the procedure is performed.

### **What if I need more information?**

If you have any questions about your ultrasound today, please do not hesitate to ask. If you would like more information or have additional questions about amniocentesis or other testing options, we would be happy to schedule you an appointment with a prenatal genetic counselor at UNC. Appointments can be scheduled by calling (919) 843-6095. The prenatal genetic counseling office can be reached at (919) 966-2229.

