Chorionic Villus Sampling (CVS)

What is chorionic villus sampling?
Chorionic [KOHR-ee-on-ik] villus [VIL-uh-s] sampling— which is also called CVS—is a test usually performed between 10 and 13 weeks of pregnancy. It involves testing a sample of the placenta, the tissue that joins you and your developing baby.

CVS is a very accurate way to determine if your pregnancy is affected by a genetic disorder, such as Down syndrome, trisomy 18, or cystic fibrosis.

Why do I need CVS?
As with all prenatal tests, CVS is optional. Women who choose CVS are often those who:

• Are older at the time of the pregnancy as the chance of having a genetic disorder affect your pregnancy increases with age
• Have a family history of a disorder that can be detected by CVS
• Have had a prenatal test suggesting an increased chance of having a genetic disorder
• Want added peace of mind about their pregnancy

Talking to your doctor or a genetic counselor can help you decide whether CVS is right for you and your baby. A genetic counselor is a medical professional who helps patients learn more about the chances of having a genetic disorder. The counselor can also discuss other testing options with you.

How is CVS done?
CVS requires going into your uterus (womb) to get a sample of the placenta. Intermountain Healthcare doctors use a procedure called transabdominal [trans-ab-DOM-uh-nl] CVS. Some doctors use a procedure called transcervical [trans-SUR-vi-kuh] CVS.

In a transabdominal CVS, a doctor uses an ultrasound to carefully guide a thin needle through your abdomen (belly) to the placenta. In a transcervical CVS, a doctor places the needle through your vagina and cervix. The needle is used to remove cells from a part of the placenta called the chorionic villi. The needle is then taken out, and the sample is sent to a laboratory for testing.

CVS takes 10 minutes or less to perform and is done as an outpatient procedure. This means the procedure will happen at a hospital or clinic, but you won’t be hospitalized.
What happens before CVS?

Before the CVS procedure, you’ll:

• **Discuss the test with your doctor or genetic counselor.** Topics for discussion may include:
  
  — **Your chance of having a child with a genetic disorder.** Your doctor and genetic counselor can help evaluate this based on your age, family history, ethnic group, and other factors.
  
  — **Possible benefits, risks, and alternatives** that may apply to your situation.
  
  — **Which genetic disorders your CVS should test.** Testing for some disorders — such as Down syndrome — is routinely done. Tests for some other disorders must be specifically ordered.
  
  — **The meaning of different possible test results.** CVS test results are accurate in telling more than 99 out of 100 people if their pregnancy is affected by a genetic disorder. **Note that a normal result doesn’t guarantee that a baby will be free of all health problems.**
  
• **Have your blood type tested.** If you have a certain blood type — called Rh negative — you may need an injection after this or any other procedure during pregnancy.

• **Drink plenty of fluid.** On the day of your procedure, you should arrive at the hospital or clinic with a full bladder.

What happens after CVS?

After the CVS procedure, you:

• **Can return to normal activities.**

• **May have mild cramping or spotting** — a small amount of bleeding from the vagina — for 1 day. This is normal. Most women have no other symptoms.

• **Should not take antibiotics for 24 hours.** Only take one dose of acetaminophen (Tylenol®) if you need it to relieve cramping.

• **Will receive test results in about 7 days.** You can discuss the results with your doctor or genetic counselor. Depending on the results, your doctor may suggest additional testing.

When should I call my doctor?

Call your doctor if you have any:

• Spotting that becomes heavy bleeding

• Mild cramping that becomes severe

• Flu-like symptoms (aches, chills) or a fever of 100°F or higher

If you have any of these symptoms and can’t reach your doctor, go to the nearest hospital or emergency room.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible benefits</th>
<th>Risks and possible complications</th>
<th>Alternatives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highly accurate results.</strong> Results are accurate in more than 99 out of 100 people.</td>
<td><strong>Miscarriage (pregnancy loss).</strong> With an experienced doctor, this happens in less than 1 out of 300 to 500 procedures.</td>
<td>• No prenatal testing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Early results.</strong> Results are usually available 7 days after the procedure.</td>
<td><strong>Leg or arm deformities.</strong> This is only possible when CVS is done earlier than 10 weeks of pregnancy. For later procedures, this risk is not greater than for all pregnancies.</td>
<td>• Other prenatal testing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mild cramping and spotting.</strong></td>
<td><strong>No results.</strong> You may not get results from CVS. This can happen when a sample of the placenta can’t be obtained, or if the testing fails.</td>
<td>• Genetic testing of you and your partner to determine the risk of passing on a genetic disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inaccurate results.</strong> CVS results are inaccurate in less than 1 out of 100 people.</td>
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<td>• Other blood testing</td>
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<td>• Ultrasound</td>
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