Perinatal Testing Unit

UCLA Medical Center, Santa Monica
1250 16th Street
Santa Monica, CA 90404
Perinatal Testing Unit
1 Merle Norman Pavilion, Suite 1460D
(424) 259-8297
About Our Services

Our Perinatal Testing Unit provides outpatient fetal diagnostic tests to help referring physicians determine your baby’s well-being. Registered nurses who specialize in fetal testing and have labor and delivery experience perform these tests. Our professional registered nurses are committed to meeting the needs of patients and their families and work in partnership with physicians, support staff and the entire healthcare team to provide you with compassionate, patient-centered care.
Fetal Diagnostic Tests

Our Perinatal Testing Unit provides two commonly prescribed fetal diagnostic tests: the non-stress fetal-heart-rate test (NST) and the amniotic fluid index (AFI). We also can monitor patients to evaluate for labor and preterm labor, as well as assess for pregnancy-related hypertensive disorders.

The NST is a noninvasive procedure to monitor and record your baby’s heartbeat. To take the test, you will lie in a comfortable, semi-reclining position with two elastic belts placed around your abdomen to measure and record your baby’s movements and any uterine activity, such as contractions. We observe your baby’s heart rate response to movement, so we need the baby to be awake and active. If your baby is not moving, we may ask you to drink water or juice and change your position and continue monitoring.

The AFI is a limited ultrasound test to measure the amount of amniotic fluid surrounding your baby. The amount of amniotic fluid is an indicator of fetal well-being. This noninvasive test, which involves the use of external ultrasound, also reveals the position of your baby.

Most women find these tests, which take place on a bed or comfortable recliner, to be reassuring and relaxing procedures. You can read, watch TV, take a nap or use a computer — free Wi-Fi available — during the testing. Juice, bottled water and light snacks are available.
Common reasons for perinatal tests include:

- Going past your due date
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Small baby or baby not growing
- Less-active baby
- History of prior stillbirth
- Low amniotic fluid index
- Pregnancy involving multiples
Useful Information

Appointments are available weekdays, from 9:30 am to 3 pm. We are closed on weekends and major holidays.

Most tests can be completed in one hour, although test times can range between 20 minutes and a few hours.

No special preparation is required, although we do prefer that expectant moms eat something before coming in for testing, as babies tend to move more after meals.

Wear something comfortable, preferably a two-piece outfit, to allow easier access to your abdomen.

You are welcome to have a visitor in the room with you.
Our Location

We are located in Suite 1460D on Level 1 of the Merle Norman Pavilion at UCLA Medical Center, Santa Monica, 1250 16th Street in Santa Monica.

Directions to Room 1460D

From our Arizona Street entrance, proceed down a long hallway to the Pavilion elevators, which are on your left near the end of the hallway. Take the Pavilion elevators to Level 1. Make a left and follow the signs to Perinatal Testing.

From our main entrance on 16th Street, please stop at our Information or Security desks and ask for specific directions to our unit.
Parking Options

Convenient valet parking is available weekdays at our main entrance on 16th Street. Patients undergoing fetal diagnostic tests can use our valet service at a discounted rate.

Parking is also available in the structures of privately owned medical buildings at 1260 15th Street and 1245 16th Street. We don’t validate at these garages. Rates are posted and available from the attendants.

There are limited metered parking spaces near the hospital, but please read the signs carefully before opting for these spaces. We suggest you pay for the full two hours in case your tests take longer than expected.

For questions about our services or to schedule an appointment, call (424)-259-8297.

Fetal Diagnostic Nurses
Nancy Himmelfarb, RN
Karen Jarrett, RN