



1. The purpose of the Alpha-fetoprotein (AFP³) test is to identify pregnant woman who may be at increased risk for having a baby with certain birth defects, such as an open neural tube defect, Down syndrome, or Trisomy 18. Current research suggests that 15 to 20 weeks gestation is the best time to do AFP³.
2. The AFP³ screening test can lead to the detection of approximately:
 - 70% of open neural tube defects; 30% will be missed.
 - 75% of Down syndrome cases in pregnancies of women under 35 years of age; 25% will be missed.
 - 85% - 90% of Down syndrome cases in women 35 or older; 10-15% will be missed.
3. The AFP³ screening test does not detect all pregnancies with open neural tube defects, Down syndrome or other birth defects.
4. Some women carrying normal fetuses will have abnormal screening test results.
5. Abnormal screening test results may indicate the need for further testing, such as ultrasound and/or amniocentesis.