

Prenatal Cell-Free DNA Screening

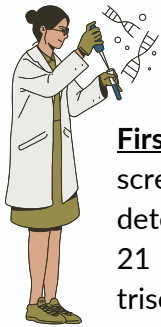
Expanding Access for All Pregnancies



1 What is Prenatal cfDNA Screening?

Prenatal cell-free DNA (cfDNA) screening uses a sample of blood from a pregnant patient to assess the risk for certain genetic conditions in the fetus. It analyzes fragments of placental DNA to determine whether there is an increased risk for chromosomal abnormalities, including **trisomy 21 (Down syndrome)**, **trisomy 18 (Edwards syndrome)**, **trisomy 13 (Patau syndrome)**, and **sex chromosome aneuploidies (e.g., Turner or Klinefelter syndrome)**.

Prenatal cfDNA screening may also be referred to as noninvasive prenatal screening, or noninvasive prenatal testing.



2 Why It Matters

First-line screening: Clinical evidence supports prenatal cfDNA screening as the most accurate and safe first-line option for determining risk for chromosomal abnormalities such as trisomy 21 (Down syndrome), trisomy 18 (Edwards syndrome), and trisomy 13 (Patau syndrome).

Prenatal cfDNA screening helps identify which pregnant patients would benefit most from invasive prenatal procedures and promotes consistent, evidence-based prenatal care. Ensuring all patients have access to this technology enhances quality and efficiency across health systems.



4 Clinical and Policy Support

- The American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG) recommends prenatal cfDNA screening over traditional methods for **all pregnant patients** with singleton and twin gestations to screen for trisomies 21, 18, and 13.
- Prenatal cfDNA screening should also be offered to screen for fetal sex chromosome aneuploidies.
- **Pre- and post-test genetic counseling** should accompany prenatal cfDNA screening so patients understand its purpose, results, and the need for confirmatory testing when indicated.
- The ACMG Evidence-Based Guideline identified prenatal cfDNA screening as a top priority and published supporting evidence in 2022.

For more information, see:

Dungan, J.S., et al. Noninvasive prenatal screening (NIPS) for fetal chromosome abnormalities in a general-risk population: An evidence-based clinical guideline of the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG). *Genetics in Med*, 25(2):100336

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Coverage & Access Gaps

The majority of major private insurers now cover prenatal cfDNA screening for all pregnant patients, regardless of risk. **However, approximately 25% of state Medicaid programs either do not cover this screening at all or only cover it for high-risk patients.**

This gap leaves many pregnant patients without access to evidence-based, prenatal cfDNA screening despite its broad adoption in clinical practice.



Call to Action

Ensuring that Medicaid covers prenatal cfDNA screening for all pregnancies would align public policy with current medical standards, provide access for all pregnant patients, and reduce the use of unnecessary invasive procedures.