Biophysical Profile and Non-Stress Test

What are these tests for?

You may need these tests if your baby is at risk for certain problems. The tests will check your baby’s health. They are often done in the third trimester.

You may have one or both tests every week until your baby is born. Some women have them twice a week.

What is a biophysical profile?

A biophysical profile is an ultrasound exam. The ultrasound will check your baby’s:

- Breathing movements
- Body movements
- Muscle tone
- Amniotic fluid (the fluid around the baby).

All of this will tell us how healthy your baby is. This test takes about 30 minutes.

What is a non-stress test?

This test uses a fetal monitor to measure the baby’s heart rate.

You will lie back in a chair or on a bed. We will place two belts around your abdomen. The belts are attached to a monitor.

This test will record:

- the baby’s heart rate
- the baby’s movements (the heart rate should increase when the baby moves)
- if your uterus is contracting (contractions, or tightenings, are common as you get closer to your due date).

A non-stress test takes about 30 minutes.

How do I get ready for these tests?

Don’t smoke for at least 2 hours before these tests. In fact, you should quit smoking if you are pregnant.

When will I get my results?

You will have your results before you leave the clinic.

What if my baby doesn’t pass these tests?

Most tests come out well. If your results are not reassuring, your care team will talk to you about your options. You may need to go to the hospital birthplace, where we can watch you more closely.