

Wales introduces new screening test for Down's syndrome

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The Welsh Government has launched a new screening programme to provide non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT) for detecting the risk of Down's, Edward's and Patau's syndromes.

Pregnant women in Wales will now be offered the new test along with the existing antenatal screening to identify any abnormalities associated with these genetic disorders during the first three months of expecting.

NIPT is intended to act as a safer and accurate alternative to invasive tests that are said to possess a small risk of miscarriage.

To be assessed over a period of three years, the NIPT currently offers combined screening for Edward's and Patau's in women expecting one baby, and combined screening for Down's, Edward's and Patau's for those having twins.

However, the test does not provide a complete diagnosis but is designed to inform the associated risks, reported BBC. A positive NIPT result has to be further confirmed by an invasive test.