



Ashkenazi Jewish Ancestry Carrier Screening

Why is carrier screening recommended for individuals of Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry?

Individuals of Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry are at increased risk for genetic disorders such as Tay Sachs, Familial Dysautonomia, Cystic Fibrosis, among others. Complications due to these disorders include but are not limited to deafness, seizures, respiratory distress, and delayed mental and social development. These disorders do not have a cure, though treatment options are available.

What is Ashkenazi Jewish Ancestry carrier screening?

Ashkenazi Jewish carrier screening is series of blood tests that can be performed before or during pregnancy to determine whether a mother carries genes to the conditions described above. People that test positive for these genes are called “carriers”. If two carriers have a baby, there is a small chance that the baby will have characteristics of the condition.

How do I complete this screening test?

There are several companies that provide this screening test; however, costs can vary. One that we recommend is called JScreen, which is a non-profit program that provides an at home kit for convenient testing. The test is performed at a certified laboratory and you will be notified of your results by one of their genetic counselors. To learn more about this screening, associated costs, and request your kit please go to JScreen.org.

What if my test is negative?

A negative test indicates that your risk of being an Ashkenazi Jewish carrier is extremely small. No additional testing is recommended for you or the baby’s father.

What if my test is positive?

A positive result indicates that you are a carrier of the abnormal gene. If your test is positive, your doctor will recommend that the baby’s father undergo the same test.

What if I’ve been tested in the past?

If you have had a Ashkenazi Jewish carrier screen in the past, please tell us! Your result will not change, so repeating the test is not necessary. We will simply add your result into your medical record.