

Date: June 13, 2017

From: Dr. Paul Jarris, CMO and SVP

Re: Fetal Fibronectin (fFN)

Fetal fibronectin (fFN) is a biomarker designed to screen for the risk of preterm labor at or before 34 weeks of gestation, often in conjunction with a transvaginal ultrasound to measure cervical length.

Recent review of professional guidelines and literature has shown that routine use of fFN testing in symptomatic women (those presenting with preterm labor) to evaluate the likelihood of delivering preterm and decide treatment options is not recommended.

* The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) does not recommend fFN testing to direct management in symptomatic women because it has poor positive predictive value (poor at identifying who is going to deliver).[[1]](#footnote-1) The Society of Maternal Fetal Medicine (SMFM) says that fFN may be helpful for women with a “borderline” transvaginal ultrasound cervical length of 20 to 29 mm.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* A recent systematic review of randomized clinical trials evaluating the use of fFN in the prevention of preterm birth in singleton pregnancies with symptoms of preterm labor found no association with prevention of preterm birth or improvement in perinatal outcomes but was associated with higher costs.[[3]](#footnote-3)[[4]](#footnote-4)
* fFN does not have a role in screening of asymptomatic women.

The Preterm Labor Assessment Toolkit (PLAT) was created as a tool for clinicians to establish a standardized pathway to assess women showing symptoms of preterm labor.

In light of this evidence and in consultation with expert clinicians, we are no longer supporting the use of fFN testing as outlined in PLAT

1. ACOG Practice Bulletin No. 171. Management of preterm labor (Interim update). October 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. SMFM Publications & Guidelines. When to use fetal fibronectin. Available at: [https://www.smfm.org/publications/117](https://www.smfm.org/publications/117-when-to-use-fetal-fibronectin)6/13/17[when-to-use-fetal-fibronectin](https://www.smfm.org/publications/117-when-to-use-fetal-fibronectin)  [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Berghella V, Saccone G. Fetal fibronectin testing for prevention of preterm birth in singleton pregnancies with threatened preterm labor: a systematic review and metaanalysis of randomized controlled trials. Am J Obstet Gynecol [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Oct;215(4):431-8.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-4)