



UK NSC screening for to prevent stillbirth recommendation

Following a review of the evidence against strict criteria, the UK NSC does not currently recommend screening for pregnancies at risk of stillbirth.

A stillbirth is a baby born dead after 24 or more weeks of pregnancy. The rate of stillbirths in the UK has decreased a lot in the last 10 years, but 3,600 stillbirths still happen in the UK every year.

To prevent stillbirths it is important to know which pregnancies are at risk. But, there is currently no screening programme to assess the risk of stillbirth during pregnancy in the UK.

Some women are at higher risk of having a stillborn baby. There are many different causes of stillbirth but this review concentrates only on placenta problems because around 40% of stillbirths are due to such problems.

Key findings supporting the UK NSC recommendation

This review looked for any tests that can identify pregnancies at risk of stillbirth and what is the best way to follow up such pregnancies. It also explored what is the best things to do to prevent stillbirth, and the costs of such actions on the baby.

This review concluded there is not enough evidence to recommend screening for stillbirth in the UK. This is because there:

- are no tests that can predict stillbirth accurately enough
- is not enough evidence to say how best to monitor women at risk of stillbirth
- is not enough evidence to say any treatments can reduce the risk of stillbirth when there is a problem with the placenta
- is not enough evidence on how to plan a birth to avoid stillbirth, without risk for the baby

The UK NSC regularly reviews its recommendations on screening for different conditions in the light of new research evidence becoming available.

To find out more about the UK NSC's stillbirth recommendation, please visit:

<https://legacyscreening.phe.org.uk/stillbirth>

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) advises ministers and the NHS in the 4 UK countries about all aspects of screening and supports implementation of screening programmes.

Find out more about the UK National Screening Committee at www.gov.uk/uknsc. The UK NSC evidence review process is described at www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-nsc-evidence-review-process and a list of all UK NSC recommendations can be found at legacy.screening.nhs.uk/recommendations

The UK NSC secretariat is hosted by Public Health England (www.gov.uk/phe).