

# PRENATAL ULTRASOUND FINDINGS

## Choroid Plexus Cysts

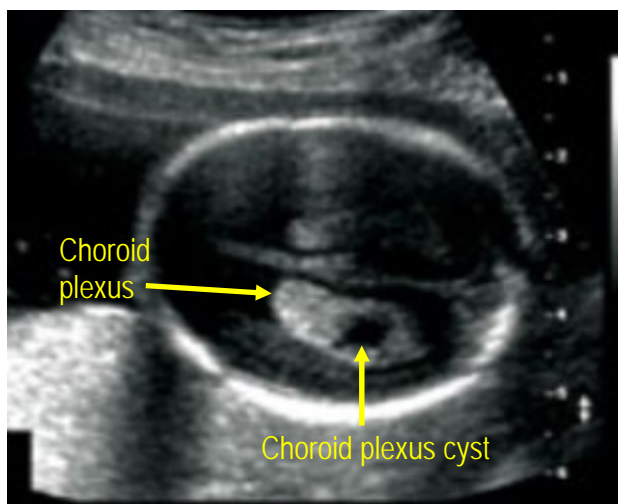
Ultrasounds are routinely done during pregnancy to help monitor the health of your baby. However, sometimes the ultrasound finds something a little different in the baby. This fact sheet will give you information about a finding known as **Choroid Plexus Cysts**.

### What is a choroid plexus cyst?

A choroid plexus cyst (CPC) is a small area of fluid collection in a part of the brain called the choroid plexus. The choroid plexus is not an area of the brain involved in thinking or development. The choroid plexus is a spongy pair of glands located on each side of the brain. These glands make the fluid that normally circulates within the brain and spinal cord.

Cysts are seen in the choroid plexus in about 1 to 2% of all babies during the second trimester ultrasound. They can be present on one or both sides of the brain. The number, size, and shape of the cysts may vary. Choroid plexus cysts can also be found in some healthy children and adults.

### Ultrasound Image of the fetal head



### What causes a choroid plexus cyst?

The structure of the choroid plexus is still forming during the middle of pregnancy. The fluid it makes can sometimes be temporarily trapped inside the sponge-like tissue of the developing choroid plexus.

### What do choroid plexus cysts mean for the baby?

Choroid plexus cysts are considered part of normal human variation and are not harmful to the baby. They are not known to interfere with normal brain development nor do they damage the brain. Choroid plexus cysts are not a tumor or type of cancer.

Although a choroid plexus cyst does not cause problems, when a cyst is seen during pregnancy there is a small chance (less than 1%) for a condition called trisomy 18.

### What is trisomy 18?

At conception, genetic information from both parents combines to create a baby. Usually the genetic information is arranged on 46 separate packages, called chromosomes. Each chromosome is paired, one from the mother and one from the father. Trisomy 18 is a relatively rare condition that occurs when there are three copies of the chromosome number 18, instead of the usual two copies. The extra chromosome 18 affects the baby's development causing severe mental retardation and physical birth defects. Because of the serious problems with

development, most babies with trisomy 18 die before birth or within a few weeks after birth. Trisomy 18 happens as a random event and does not usually run in families.

### Are any additional tests needed during the pregnancy?

To get the best estimate of the risk for trisomy 18 in your pregnancy, it is important to consider many different things, including your results from prenatal testing and the presence of any additional ultrasound findings. If your baby has no other signs of trisomy 18 on ultrasound and your California Prenatal Screening test was reassuring, your baby is very unlikely to have trisomy 18 and no further testing is routinely recommended.

A genetic counselor will review your pregnancy history and contact you if there is any further testing to consider.

A test called amniocentesis can accurately diagnose trisomy 18 during pregnancy. This is an optional test for women of all ages.

Amniocentesis is usually done between 15 and 22 weeks of pregnancy, and has a 1/300-1/500 risk for miscarriage.

- To learn more about prenatal testing go to the Kaiser Permanente website:  
<http://genetics.kp.org>

### Will choroid plexus cysts go away?

Most CPCs seen in the middle of the pregnancy will go away before delivery. They usually disappear by 24 to 26 weeks of pregnancy. Since they do not cause problems for the baby, there is no special concern if they are still visible at a later time. For this reason, you do not need any additional ultrasounds to monitor the cysts.

### Where can I get more information?

You can speak with your doctor, nurse practitioner, nurse midwife, or a genetic counselor if you have additional questions about this ultrasound finding.

### Kaiser Genetics Departments

Website: <http://genetics.kaiser.org/>

Fresno	(559) 324-5330
Oakland	(510) 752-6298
Sacramento	(916) 614-4075
San Francisco	(415) 833-2998
San Jose	(408) 972-3300