

# First trimester ultrasound - fetal face

*Patient Information Series – What you should know. what you should ask.*

Many women will be offered a routine first-trimester ultrasound to assess the baby's risk of chromosome anomalies. In this exam, an early fetal anatomy study, including the fetus face, will be done. This exam is usually performed between 12 to 14-weeks' gestation.

## How is the fetal face viewed?

The scan to study the baby's face is usually performed transabdominally – this means an ultrasound probe passes through the abdominal wall to see through your uterus. Occasionally it is necessary to use a transvaginal probe to gain the best images. The proper examination of the facial structures includes two planes.

## What can a first-trimester exam detect?

This examination can detect many fetal face malformations. However, it is essential to be aware that not all abnormalities can be seen in the first-trimester ultrasound, even with the best ultrasound equipment. Assessment of the fetal face in the first-trimester ultrasound allows the early detection of abnormalities, which may lead to the diagnosis of syndromes, chromosomal abnormalities, or even rarer conditions, such as infections or metabolic disorders.

## What other questions should I ask?

- During the scan, was my baby's face assessed?
- Can I see a profile of my baby's face?
- Is the nasal bone present?
- Should I have more tests done?

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