

24 July 2020

PRESS RELEASE

Simple blood test to spot pregnancy risk

Mums-to-be in the Black Country can now have a simple blood test to see if they are at risk of getting a potentially serious complication in pregnancy.

Pre-eclampsia affects a small percentage of women during pregnancy and is a result of the placenta not working as it should. Symptoms include headaches, swelling, visual disturbances and high blood pressure although many women will be unaware they have it. It can be harmful for the mother and baby and it is important that it is detected early.

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust is thought to be the first in the area to start offering a blood test which will help to identify women at risk of developing the condition, so their pregnancy can be managed accordingly.

Mrs Rashda Imran, obstetrics and gynaecology consultant with the Trust, said: "This test will help us managing the women at risk of developing, pre-eclampsia.

"The test measures two proteins in the blood, and if the results indicate an increased risk then we will use this, along with other factors such as blood pressure and protein in urine, to manage the condition in the safest way for both mum and baby. This could mean more regular visits to the community midwife or possibly admission to hospital for observation."

Pre-eclampsia can happen as early as 20 weeks into pregnancy but is more common after 34 weeks and may occur soon after the baby is delivered. It affects about one in 20 pregnant women and although many cases are mild, the condition can lead to serious complications for both mother and baby if it's not monitored and treated.

Mums-to-be who present with symptoms such as raised blood pressure will be offered the blood test between 20 and 35 weeks.

***** ENDS *****

Issued by the communications team at The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust.