

WHAT IS A BIOPHYSICAL PROFILE?

A biophysical profile (BPP) is a way to check the health of your baby. An ultrasound exam is used to perform the test; a nonstress test may also be included. The test is scored from 0 to 10 and indicates the status of your baby's health.

WHEN IS IT USED?

If the result of a nonstress test is nonreactive, a biophysical profile is often performed. It may also be used as the primary method of fetal surveillance. The BPP is usually performed in the third trimester (28 weeks and beyond) for women with a high-risk pregnancy. The BPP is usually performed once a week.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR A BIOPHYSICAL PROFILE?

No special preparation is necessary.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE PROCEDURE?

The ultrasound exam may last from 30-60 minutes. During the exam four things are observed and given a score of 2 (present) or 0 (absent):

- the amount of amniotic fluid
- movements of the baby's body
- the baby's muscle tone
- breathing movements made by the baby

A nonstress test may be performed as part of the BPP; the score for a reactive test is 2 and 0 for a nonreactive test.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PROCEDURE?

From the results of the tests your health care provider will calculate a score for the biophysical profile.

- A score of 8 or 10 is considered normal.
- A score of 6 is borderline.
- A score of 4 or less suggests there may be a problem and further evaluation or delivery is indicated. Your doctor will discuss management recommendations with you.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS PROCEDURE?

The biophysical profile is an excellent way to ensure the health of your baby. If there is concern for the baby's well being, delivery will likely be recommended. On the other hand, a reassuring BPP allows a high risk pregnancy to continue until closer to the due date, when the baby will be more mature.

WHAT IS A NONSTRESS TEST?

A nonstress test is a procedure that monitors the fetal heart rate on a continuous basis. An external fetal monitor is attached to the mother's abdomen and records the baby's heart rate and uterine contractions. When a healthy baby moves, the heart rate goes up.

WHEN IS IT USED?

You may have this test if:

- You have a high-risk obstetric condition such as a small baby or placental problem.
- You had complications in a previous pregnancy, such as a stillbirth.
- You have noticed that your baby is moving less.
- You are past your due date.
- You have a medical condition such as diabetes or hypertension.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR A NONSTRESS TEST?

- Eat a full breakfast or lunch before the test.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE PROCEDURE?

An external electronic fetal monitor is placed on your abdomen. This monitors the baby's heart rate and uterine contractions.

The results of the test are classified as follows:

- **Reactive:** The baby's heart rate increases by 15 beats a minute above baseline and stays increased for at least 15 seconds. Reactive results of this test are a sign that the baby is healthy.
- **Nonreactive:** The heart rate does not meet the criteria above.

Often a test is nonreactive because the baby is in a sleep state whereby the heart rate is less reactive. The test may be continued for a longer period of time until the heart rate becomes reactive. Sometimes drinking a glass of juice will help the baby become more active or a fetal acoustic stimulator (a device that makes a noise like a buzzer) may be placed against your abdomen to awaken the baby.

If the nonstress test is nonreactive, a biophysical profile may be done. If the well-being of the baby is still uncertain, further observation of you and the baby will be performed in the hospital.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PROCEDURE?

You may need to repeat the test 3 to 7 days later depending upon the indication for the testing. Your doctor will discuss these issues with you.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS TEST?

- If the test result is abnormal, it helps identify a baby that may have some compromise of oxygen or blood flow. As a result of the test, your provider may do more tests and may consider delivering the baby before labor starts.
- If the test result is normal, it can reassure the mother that the baby will be well during labor unless new problems develop.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THIS TEST?

None.



BIOPHYSICAL PROFILE & NON STRESS TEST



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