

## Consensus Statement: **Laboratory Testing/Screening**

The New Zealand College of Midwives recognises that a registered midwife has the educational background and knowledge to appropriately order and correctly interpret laboratory tests in relation to pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period for women and their newborn.

### Rationale:

Laboratory testing/screening is undertaken to provide information as part of the assessment of the well-being of the woman and her baby<sup>3</sup>. This testing enables;

- ongoing assessments of the woman and her baby
- provision of advice on appropriate treatments for individuals
- referral to the appropriate practitioner/specialist for women/babies with abnormal results<sup>4</sup>

### Practice Notes:

- There is a schedule of subsidised laboratory testing/ screening tests that midwives may request for women and babies in their care<sup>1,2</sup>.
- It is the midwife's professional responsibility to uphold each woman's right to informed decision making throughout the childbirth experience<sup>3</sup>.
- Provide the pregnant woman with appropriate information and education regarding screening and testing during her pregnancy<sup>1</sup>.
- This may include providing written information as well as screening/laboratory test results.

If a midwife orders a laboratory test, she is responsible for following up on the results of the test in a timely manner, including;

- discussing with the woman the interpretation of laboratory/screening results and, if warranted,
- offering the woman a referral to the appropriate practitioner/specialist and initiating the referral<sup>3,4</sup>
- ensuring copies of test results are included in the clinical record and document any discussions / decisions regarding care relating to the test results

Ongoing management of underlying medical conditions is the responsibility of the health professional who is involved in managing this aspect of the woman's care.

### References:

1. Laboratory Test List (2015). <http://www.centrautas.co.nz/assets/Planning-and-Collaboration/Laboratory-Schedules/Laboratory-Schedule-Test-List-2015-Final.pdf>
2. Ministry of Health. Maternity Services Notice, Section 88 of the Public Health and Disability Act 2000, Ministry of Health, 2007. Wellington, NZ .
3. New Zealand College of Midwives. (2015). Midwives Handbook for Practice, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. NZCOM, Christchurch.
4. Ministry of Health. Guidelines for Consultation with Obstetric and Related Medical Services (Referral Guidelines) 2012. Wellington: Ministry of Health

**Bibliography:**

Ministry of Health. *Antenatal screening for Downs Syndrome and other conditions*. Ministry of Health, 2015 Wellington, NZ

Ministry of Health. *HIV Screening in Pregnancy*. Ministry of Health 2004. Wellington, NZ.

Ministry of Health. *Universal newborn screening for NZ*. Ministry of Health, 2005. Wellington, NZ

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**Ratification:**

*Original Statement ratified November 1996, updated 2002*

*References updated 2009, August 2016*

The purpose of New Zealand College of Midwives Consensus Statements is to provide women, midwives and the maternity services with the profession's position on any given situation. The guidelines are designed to educate and support best practice. All position statements are regularly reviewed and updated in line with evidence-based practice.