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Cystic Fibrosis Carrier Screening

Cystic fibrosis is one of the most common inherited diseases in the US. It is a chronic, progressive disease affecting primarily the lungs and gastrointestinal system, resulting in recurrent lung infections and problems with growth and weight gain. There is usually a shortened life span. CF is a recessively inherited disease caused by the inheritance of two abnormal genes, one from each parent. An individual who inherits only one abnormal gene will be a carrier, but is otherwise healthy. However, when two CF carriers have a child together, there is a 25% (1 in 4) chance with each pregnancy that the child will have CF. Approximately 1 in 25 Caucasians in the US is a CF carrier. The CF carrier rate is lower among African-Americans and Asian-Americans.

Testing for CF gene abnormalities can detect most, but not all, CF mutations. The testing is done by a blood test. Not all gene abnormalities have been identified and tests for rare abnormalities have not yet been developed. Testing that is available can detect over 85% of total CF gene abnormalities in the US overall. The detection rate is over 95% for Ashkenazi Jews.

When both partners in a couple are not carriers of a CF gene abnormality, the risk for CF in any child the couple has falls to under 1 in 100,000. This can be contrasted with the incidence of CF in the general population of 1 in 2,500. When only one partner in a couple is tested and is found to be a non-carrier, the risk for CF in a pregnancy falls but not as much as when both partners are tested and found to be non-carriers.

If both partners are identified as CF carriers, the risk of CF in any pregnancy is 1 in 4. Prenatal testing of a pregnancy at risk for CF is available. Such testing can determine whether the fetus is or is not likely to have the disease, with a predictive accuracy of close to 100%.

Please sign below to acknowledge that you have read and understand the information above and to indicate your choice for testing.

We desire to be tested for cystic fibrosis. _____

We decline testing for cystic fibrosis. _____