Fetal Fibronectin (fFN) Test

The fFN test helps to show if premature labor is likely. Vaginal fluid is tested to detect the amount of a protein called fetal fibronectin. The presence of this protein shows changes of the uterus and fetal membranes during pregnancy, meaning labor is more likely.

A negative test result between 22 and 34 weeks of pregnancy means it is unlikely that delivery will occur early. If the test is positive, a preterm delivery may occur.

Among women with symptoms of preterm labor:

- 99% with a negative result will not deliver their babies within 2 weeks
- 17%, or 1 out of 6 women, with a positive result will deliver preterm within 2 weeks

How the test is performed
This is an easy and safe test. A special swab (like a Q-Tip ®) is used to collect a small amount of fluid from the vagina. It is done before a pelvic exam to check if the cervix (the opening of the womb) has begun to prepare for delivery.

Getting results
The sample is sent to a lab and results are ready within 1 to 3 hours.

If you have a positive test result
If you are in the early stages of premature labor, steps will be taken to help you continue your pregnancy in a healthy and safe way.

- You may be told to stay in bed and to drink more fluids.
- You may be given medication to help slow down your contractions, or other medication such as antibiotics.
- If premature labor is diagnosed early and your contractions stop, you may be allowed to go home from the hospital.
- Follow your doctor’s instructions and watch for any signs that labor is starting again.

Contact your doctor or nurse with any questions or concerns.