



Stanford
HEALTH CARE

Fetal Fibronectin

The fetal fibronectin assay is used to help identify patients at risk for preterm delivery. The test is useful in ruling out preterm labor in patients between 24 and 34 weeks of pregnancy with regular uterine contractions. The test checks for the presence of a protein that is normally found only in the uterus. If the protein is found in the cervix or vagina, it means there has been a break in the membrane attachment and may warn of preterm labor in the next 7-14 days.

The data indicate that a negative test has a maximal negative predictive value of approximately 96% for not delivering within the next 2 weeks, while a positive test has a 15-20% positive predictive value for preterm delivery. Despite these data, there have been no prospective interventional studies demonstrating a decrease in preterm deliveries or improved perinatal outcomes based on the knowledge of the results of this test. No study has examined the efficacy of FFN on the incidence, morbidity, and mortality of preterm delivery. However, there may be selected cases in which quickly available results may be helpful in assessing the patient's risk of preterm delivery allowing for an impact on clinical decisions.

Although a negative test appears to be useful in ruling out imminent preterm delivery (i.e., within 2 weeks), the clinical implications of a positive result have not been fully evaluated. The test is not used as a screening test for preterm labor