

News Release
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Decision aid for amniocentesis certified by Washington state

LEBANON, NH -- Women are offered a dizzying array of tests over the course of their pregnancy. Some of these tests - including amniocentesis, which looks for chromosomal abnormalities in the baby - are considered optional. Deciding whether to have an amniocentesis test can be extremely stressful for pregnant women and their families. While amniocentesis can tell if the baby has a condition like Down syndrome, the test also poses small risks of miscarriage and infection. How do pregnant women and their families decide?

Decision aids help patients weigh the pros and cons of testing or treatment options. They're different from traditional patient education materials in that they encourage patients to consider their personal needs and values while reviewing medical information. Decision aids also empower patients to communicate openly with their doctor, with the overall goal of making medical decisions together.

A group of researchers have developed a short decision aid to help women and their families decide about amniocentesis testing. The "Amniocentesis test: yes or no?" **Option Grid™** decision aid presents information about the risks and benefits associated with having amniocentesis or forgoing testing. The decision aid was recently certified by Washington State Health Care Authority as part of its first-in-nation initiative to incorporate certified tools into state-sponsored accountable care programs and select healthcare plans.

The Option Grid™ decision aid for amniocentesis was developed by an international team of clinicians and researchers, led by Marie-Anne Durand PhD, a professor at The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice. The team worked directly with pregnant women to identify their common questions and concerns about amniocentesis testing. They found that there was high demand for reliable, easy-to-understand information to guide decision-making.

"With uncertain outcomes, far-reaching consequences, and significant harms and benefits, deciding about amniocentesis testing is one of the most difficult decisions for pregnant women and their partner to consider," said Durand. "Providing unbiased information is crucial in helping families make this emotionally charged decision."

Washington state's certification program encourages healthcare professionals to use decision aids in clinical practice. The state's policy work, including legislation establishing legal incentives for decision aid use, is based on extensive research linking decision aids with greater patient participation in care. Studies also suggest that decision aids lead to better risk perceptions, improved patient knowledge and increases in shared decision-making. For women and their partners facing a decision about amniocentesis, certified decision aids can act as a trusted information resource and a springboard for honest conversations with their doctors.

Patients and healthcare professionals across the country can view the list of certified patient decision aids on Washington State Health Care Authority's [website](#). The 'Amniocentesis test: yes or no?' Option Grid™ decision aid is also publically available at optiongrid.org.

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About The Option Grid Collaborative

The Option Grid Collaborative, an initiative of The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice, produces concise, evidence-based decision aids for patients and healthcare professionals worldwide. Founded in 2009, the Collaborative has grown to be the third largest producer of patient decision aids, working with a network of over 250 patients, clinicians and researchers to design, develop and disseminate one page decision aids. The Option Grid Collaborative has published over 43 Option Grid™ decision aids, all publically available at optiongrid.org.