

TORCH Panel



Does this test have other names?

TORCH screen

What is this test?

The TORCH panel test is used to help diagnose infections that could harm the unborn baby during pregnancy. TORCH is an acronym of the 5 infections covered in the screening:

- **Toxoplasmosis.** This infection is caused by a parasite commonly picked up from cat stools. Babies can get congenital toxoplasmosis. Congenital means present at birth. If untreated, it can cause blindness, deafness, seizures, and intellectual disability.
- **Other, including syphilis.** Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection that a mother can pass on to an unborn baby during pregnancy. Syphilis can cause a baby to be stillborn. It can also cause premature labor, birth defects, low birth weight, and deafness.
- **Rubella.** Rubella, also called German measles, is a viral infection that can easily be passed from person to person through sneezing or coughing. Rubella is less common today because a vaccine protects against it. But pregnant people with rubella can pass the virus to their baby, which may be a serious condition. Rubella can cause miscarriage, premature birth, or stillbirth. It can also cause problems with the baby's heart, vision, hearing, and growth.
- **Cytomegalovirus (CMV).** CMV is a type of herpes virus and is the most common congenital infection in babies. Mothers can get CMV by sexual contact or contact with bodily fluids, such as saliva from a person who has CMV. CMV can cause long-term problems in babies, including problems with vision, hearing, and mental development.
- **Herpes simplex virus (HSV).** Pregnant people can get the genital herpes simplex virus through sexual contact with an infected person. They can also pass the infection along to the developing baby during delivery. HSV in babies can cause low birth weight, miscarriage, and preterm birth. It can also cause sores that affect the skin, eyes, and mouth, as well as brain and organ damage.

These infections can cause serious problems during pregnancy, so it's important to find them early in pregnancy so they can be treated, if treatment is possible. Pregnant people often get the TORCH screening test at their first prenatal visit. Your healthcare provider will tell you if TORCH screening is needed.

Why do I need this test?

You may need this test if you are pregnant. This test may also be done on newborn babies to diagnose any possible infections.

What other tests might I have along with this test?

You may have other prenatal screening tests done at the same time, including:

- HIV test
- Test for Down syndrome or other chromosome conditions
- Gestational diabetes test

What do my test results mean?

Test results may vary depending on your age, gender, health history, and other things. Your test results may be different depending on the lab used. They may not mean you have a problem. Ask your healthcare provider what your test results mean for you.

The TORCH panel test results show if you have any of these infections. Normal test results will show that you do not have any of the viruses, bacteria, or parasites screened for in the test. Positive test results will show that you have 1 or more of these viruses, bacteria, or parasites.

How is this test done?

The test is done with a blood sample. A needle is used to draw blood from a vein in your arm or hand.

Does this test pose any risks?

Having a blood test with a needle carries some risks. These include bleeding, infection, bruising, and feeling lightheaded. When the needle pricks your arm or hand, you may feel a slight sting or pain. Afterward, the site may be sore.

What might affect my test results?

Nothing is likely to affect the results of this test. Your healthcare provider will tell you if any of your medicines may affect the test and if you should not take them before having the test.

How do I get ready for this test?

You likely don't need to do anything special to get ready for the test. Follow any directions your healthcare provider gives you about not eating or drinking or not taking medicines before the test. Tell your provider about all medicines, herbs, vitamins, or supplements you are taking. This includes medicines that don't need a prescription and any illegal drugs you may use.

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