How much does screening cost?
The fee is $221.60 Most prepaid health plans and insurance companies pay the fee. Medi-Cal also pays it.
The $221.60 fee covers the blood tests as well as authorized diagnostic tests.

This fee does not cover Nuchal Translucency Ultrasound (NT).

How can I get more information?
Please talk to your doctor or clinic about these prenatal screening tests.

All pregnant women will receive a booklet called "The California Prenatal Screening Program." Patients should sign the consent form "Yes" or "No".

Note: Patients with a family history of birth defects may want to go directly to diagnostic testing instead of screening. Talk to your doctor or clinic.

Please visit our website for more information:
www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/pns

California Department of Public Health
Genetic Disease Screening Program
850 Marina Bay Parkway, F175
Richmond, CA 94804
(866)718-7915 toll free

To help detect birth defects

The California Prenatal Screening Program
It is important to get prenatal care as soon as you think you are pregnant....

Early care can help you have a healthy baby.

Prenatal Screening Tests:
One or two blood tests, plus a special ultrasound, can help detect some birth defects. For example, they can help find spina bifida and Down syndrome in babies before they are born. Spina bifida is a birth defect that often causes paralysis. Down syndrome causes mental retardation. The Prenatal Screening tests also help find some other birth defects.

Can I have prenatal screening tests to help find birth defects?
Yes. If you want the tests, talk to your doctor or clinic. You will receive a booklet to read.

What do the results show?
Most of the time screening will be "normal" or "Screen Negative". This means your baby probably does not have spina bifida, Down syndrome or some other birth defects.

What if the screening test results are "Screen Positive"?
This means that there is a higher than usual chance for some birth defects. But diagnostic tests are needed to know if there really is a birth defect.

You would be offered free follow-up services at a State-approved Prenatal Diagnosis Center. A Genetic Counselor will explain the test results and offer free diagnostic testing.

Most of the time, no birth defects are found during diagnostic tests. Most babies are healthy.

Once in a while, diagnostic tests will detect a birth defect. A counselor will help the woman or couple make decisions about the pregnancy.

How can I get the Prenatal tests?
A doctor or clinic will order one or two blood tests:

1. Get a blood test between 10 weeks and 13 weeks 6 days of pregnancy. This is called a First Trimester test.
2. Get a second blood test between 15 and 20 weeks of pregnancy. This is called a Second Trimester test.

Sometimes you can also get a special ultrasound called Nuchal Translucency (NT). It is done between 11 weeks 2 days and 14 weeks 2 days of pregnancy.

If the results of these tests are put together, it is called Integrated Screening.