Antenatal Testing

What is antenatal testing?
Antenatal testing is a combination of fetal heart rate monitoring and ultrasound imaging performed prior to delivery.

There are 2 types of testing:
- **Twice weekly** – Consists of a fluid check by ultrasound every week with fetal heart rate monitoring (non-stress test or NST) twice a week.
- **Weekly** – Consists of 30 minute ultrasound to look for fetal tone, movement, breathing, and fluid.

Why and whom do we test?
We test women who have a chronic health problem or a pregnancy-induced health risk that could put her baby at risk for a stillbirth. Some of these health problems are listed below:
- **Chronic Health Problems**: High blood pressure, thyroid issues, lupus, diabetes, blood disorders, kidney or heart disease, age over 37 years old require antenatal testing.
- **Pregnancy Related Health Problems**: Gestational diabetes, gestational hypertension, fetal growth problems, too much or too little amniotic fluid, post-term pregnancy beyond 41 weeks, and several other possible complications require antenatal testing.

When do we test?
Testing time depends on why we are testing, but is often not initiated until 32-34 weeks gestation.
- For advanced maternal age, testing starts at 37 weeks.
- For post-term, testing starts at 41 weeks.