

Maternal fetal medicine (MFM) is the care of women with high-risk or problematic pregnancies. It is a branch of Obstetrics, a specialty dealing with the care of a woman and her baby during pregnancy, birth and shortly afterwards.

Wellington is one of the four regional centres for MFM in New Zealand. The other units are located in Auckland, Waikato and Christchurch. If you are entitled to publicly funded healthcare and reside a distance from these units, your local DHB may assist you with the travel expenses when you are required to attend an MFM clinic.

You have been referred to MFM unit by your LMC for us to organise an assessment. The assessment does not always require an appointment at the MFM unit.

Reasons for referral

- A problem has been identified on a routine scan
- High risk results from nuchal screening
- High risk results from the combined testing
- Baby has an abnormality. Structural (e.g. cleft lip, heart defect or kidney problems), or a growth or development problem.
- Family history of genetic problems
- Your previous baby had a genetic abnormality

How long will I wait for an appointment?

All referrals are prioritised by our MFM specialist. The wait time will vary according to the referral as

some conditions need more urgent attention than others. We try to see women within one working week of the referral being received from your LMC.

It is a good idea to have a support person with you as you may have to understand complex issues or possibly receive some bad news. In some cases you may need to discuss difficult options.

What happens at the visit?

You will be seen by a MFM specialist, a midwife and possibly a geneticist. Usually they will talk to you before you have a scan.

The scan will be performed by a sonographer (a health care professional specialising in scans) and will concentrate on the area that is causing concern, but will also look carefully at your entire baby. Picture images of your baby in the womb will be taken.

After the scan you will have a consultation with the fetal medicine specialist with the MFM midwife. The findings of your scan will be discussed with you and whether there is any need for further investigation e.g. amniocentesis, or chorionic villus sampling (CVS).

If either of these procedures take place, it is advisable to spend the rest of the day resting quietly.

Will I stay under the care of my LMC?

MFM staff will phone, fax or write to your caregivers to update them after you have been seen. To assist us please could you bring details of your LMC and GP with you to your appointment.

[continued]

Some women who are referred to the MFM unit will go on to have normal pregnancies with well babies. Some women LMC's will continue to provide care supported by the MFM staff. In the case of more complicated pregnancies, MFM will provide on-going management under the care of the MFM Team.

Babies with Heart Problems

If you have been referred because your baby is suspected of having a heart abnormality, we will scan to check if there is a problem and what the likely diagnosis will be. Some babies with heart problems will need surgery after their birth. If this is the case, the MFM team will recommend delivery at Auckland City Hospital where the Paediatric cardiac surgery specialists are based.

If you are recommended to deliver your baby at Auckland City Hospital, you will be provided with support from the Auckland MFM unit and the Paediatric cardiology service. They will consult with you and advise when they recommend the delivery should take place.

Contact us

The Team at Wellington Maternal Fetal Medicine understands visiting our department can be a stressful time. If you have any further queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to make contact with us.

Phone: 04 806 0774 or 0508 2255 636

Hours: Monday to Friday 8am to 4:30pm

