

Will your child be sick as well? Testing before pregnancy

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Couples at risk to transmit a genetic condition to their offspring learn during genetic counselling about various features of the condition, therapeutic options, prognosis, recurrence risks and possible ways to prevent transmission. Among these are the conventional prenatal diagnosis established during pregnancy and the more recently developed preimplantation genetic diagnosis established before pregnancy. It refers to a procedure whereby a genetic diagnosis is established in day 3 to day 5 embryo obtained after in vitro fertilisation. The last technique has given hope to many couples at risk.

A prerequisite to this procedure is to be aware of that risk. This means the realisation by family doctor, obstetrician, haematologist or genetic counsellor of a screening strategy i.e. testing the patient's partner; if couple at risk for an affected child, offering genetic counselling. One must keep in mind that preimplantation genetic diagnosis is not only a "technical" goal; the deception might be huge.