Information Sheet:  
Echogenic Intracardiac Focus

What is an echogenic intracardiac focus?
- An echogenic area, or bright spot in the fetal heart thought to represent a small area of calcification
- Not a heart defect; does not affect the structure or function of the heart
- A finding seen in ~4% of all pregnancies with higher rates in some populations such as those of Asian descent
- Usually an isolated finding of little significance

What problems could be associated with this finding?
- This is likely normal variation in development
- Some studies suggest there may be an increased risk of a chromosome abnormality such as Down syndrome when this finding is seen
  - This is most concerning if there are other differences identified on ultrasound or if a patient is already at increased risk of a chromosome abnormality due to maternal age (>35 years) or abnormal screening tests
- In a low risk pregnancy, this finding is unlikely to significantly increase risks for a chromosome abnormality

How do I determine my patient’s risks?
- A finding of echogenic intracardiac focus approximately doubles a woman’s risk for Down syndrome in her pregnancy
  - Example: If previous risk was 1:1000, new risk following soft sign adjustment is 1:500
- See attached flow chart for risk adjustments

What if other findings were also noted on ultrasound?
- Please refer your patient to genetics or for follow up fetal assessment as necessary
- Follow up ultrasound is not indicated for isolated echogenic intracardiac focus

Where can I get more information?
- You may contact the maternal serum screening coordinator at 204-787-2098

This information sheet is provided by:  
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