

(From Shannon Bunch Email) Monday afternoon as I am sitting in Louisville, KY at the National Quartet Convention (NQC) Melissa calls me from Nashville. She has just left the doctor's office for what was supposed to be a routine checkup. This was the first doctor's visit she has made without me, and the doctor had just shared some rather disturbing news. Needless to say emotions were running very high as she was digesting and relating the following statements.

Let me preface this paragraph by sharing that Melissa and I opted for genetic testing for several chromosomal defects earlier in the pregnancy and those results were **NEGATIVE**. Dr. Jabusch, our obstetrician, shared that during the last ultrasound, when we found out we had a little girl on the way, two abnormalities had been discovered. There was an elevated thickness of tissue around the baby's neck, and there was a small "spot" on the baby's heart. These are called "markers" for the possibility of Down's syndrome. She then gave us an appointment for a specialist here in Nashville who is perhaps the most sought after doctor in his field. Upon review of yet another ultrasound today there were three other "markers" for Down's syndrome

discovered. Let me say that according to the information we have, these are only "markers" not necessarily indicators, and by far not all conclusive. In the majority of cases these "markers" resolve themselves and baby is normal. Had only one of these markers been present, there would have been no further tests. However, we opted today to have amniocentesis.

Amniocentesis is a test performed to determine the health, sex, or genetic constitution of an unborn baby by taking a sample of amniotic fluid through a needle inserted into the womb of the mother. This test alone increased her chances of miscarriage to 1 in 200. (These are numbers according to medical studies.) However, Dr. Jeanty (our radiologist/specialist today) shared that having performed countless amniocentesis procedures over the past 30 years, not one patient had ever miscarried to his knowledge. It will take 7-10 days to have final results as the baby's cells must be harvested from the amniotic fluid and then grown.