

# Echogenic Bowel

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## *What is Echogenic Bowel?*

Echogenic bowel refers to an ultrasound finding where loops of fetal bowel (intestines) appear bright. When echogenic bowel is the only unusual finding on ultrasound, the infant typically doesn't have any problems.

## *What causes Echogenic Bowel?*

Most fetuses identified with echogenic bowel are normal. There are a number of causes of echogenic bowel. Most frequently there is no underlying cause identified and no concerns with the infant. However, echogenic bowel can be associated with cystic fibrosis, cytomegalovirus infection, bowel obstruction, trisomy 21, intrauterine growth restriction, or the fetus swallowing blood after an intra-amniotic bleed among other things.

## *How common is it?*

Echogenic bowel is seen in less than 1% of pregnancies and in the vast majority of cases is of no consequence.

## *Is there a test that can help reassure me?*

There are several additional tests that can be performed for screening. A maternal blood sample can be used to assess risk for Down Syndrome. A consultation can be made with a high-risk obstetrician (Perinatologist or Maternal Fetal Medicine Specialist) for further ultrasound evaluation.