# Jewish Bioethics: Prenatal genetic screening (4 of 4)

Can a Jewish mother undergo during her pregnancy prenatal screening tests. In other words, all those routine tests aimed to detect certain genetic conditions or birth defects in her baby(*chas veshalom*)?
The answer to this question relates directly with the differences of opinion among the rabbis on the status of abortion (see **here**) and the timeline when abortion will be authorized or not according to the different opinions (see **here**).
Based on the opinion of the former Chief rabbi of Israel Abraham Shapira, z'l, rabbi Melamed writes in *penine halakha* that it is preferable for a pregnant woman to perform all the prenatal screening she is asked by her doctor. Based on the results, if necessary, she would consult with a rabbinical authority how to proceed further. The expert rabbi will base his ruling considering all the pieces of the puzzle: the severity of the detected disease, the month or week during pregnancy when the disease is found, the mother's general heath, etc. Therefore, the more information he is provided, the more well-founded his verdict will be. Even the mental health of the mother is a point of consideration for the rabbi. Consider this controversy among two contemporary rabbis: Rabbi Lebushe Mordekhai thinks that the possibility of a mental disorders in the mother of an unhealthy child tantamount being her life in danger. While rabbi Nishmat Abraham disagrees and said that today's psychiatric medication helps the mother to cope with the risks of depression. As the reader can see, this is a very sensitive area and the opinions of the abbis differ, sometimes from one extreme to the other (see**here** why).

The information coming from prenatal screening is important even for those whose opinion is against interrupting pregnancy. Because there is a significant psychological value for the parents preparing themselves for the conditions they will find.

**IN THIS PARTICULAR AND DELICATE SUBJECT, I MUST ASK THE READER TO CONSIDER THE PROVIDED INFORMATION EXCLUSIVELY AS EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL. IF chas veshalom A DECISION NEEDS TO BE MADE, THE COUPLE SHOULD CONSULT WITH THEIR RABBI.**