

Fetal fibronectin (fFN) is a basement membrane protein produced by the fetal membranes that functions as an adhesion binder of the placenta and membranes to the decidua. It is normally present in cervical secretions until 16-20 weeks of gestation. Numerous trials have shown both an association with the presence of fFN and preterm birth and a decrease in the risk of preterm birth when the test result for the presence of this protein is negative. It has been hypothesized that fFN is a marker for the disruption of the chorioamnion and underlying decidua due to inflammation with or without infection.

fFN assessments can be performed every 2 weeks between 22 and 35 weeks of gestation. A negative test has a greater than 95% likelihood of not delivering within 14 days. The sensitivity of the test has been reported to be about 61%. A positive test has also been associated with an increased risk of maternal and fetal infection. The combination of fFN and cervical length via transvaginal sonography has been used to better predict which high risk patients are most likely and least likely to deliver prematurely.