



# AMNIOCENTESIS

## What is an Amniocentesis?

An amniocentesis is a procedure that involves taking a sample of the fluid that surrounds the baby. The baby's skin cells slough off into the amniotic fluid. By taking a sample of that fluid you also have cells from the baby.

This procedure is done by locating the safest pocket of fluid using ultrasound and inserting a thin needle into that pocket. About 3-4 teaspoons of fluid is removed. The baby will replace that fluid when it urinates.

In most cases, we will ask you to take the fluid sample, along with an order from our office, to the laboratory at one of the local hospitals.

## Why would I need an Amniocentesis?

### Testing for fetal lung maturity

There are times when delivery of your baby may be necessary before you go into labor on your own. It is much safer if the baby's lungs are mature and ready to work on their own. The laboratory can test an amniotic fluid sample and measure the level of certain chemicals to determine if the baby is likely to have mature lungs.

### Testing for genetic abnormalities

Some parents wish to have genetic testing done on their babies. Some of the reasons may include:

- A family history of a genetic disorders
- The mother is over 35 years of age and has a greater risk for having a baby with Down Syndrome
- An ultrasound or a blood screening test showed the possibility of a genetic problem

When you are having an amniocentesis for genetic testing, the lab will find the fetal cells in the fluid, prepare them, and look at those cells under a very high powered microscope.

Each cell of a person's body contains chromosomes that are essentially a map of who we are. The lab can determine with a 99% certainty, whether there is an abnormality of one or more of those chromosomes.

A normal amniocentesis does not guarantee a perfect baby. Chromosomes contain even smaller structures called genes. An amniocentesis does not identify single gene abnormalities. In other words, not all birth defects are related to an abnormal appearing chromosome.

Discuss your personal situation with your health care provider to see if amniocentesis could be beneficial to you. A genetic amniocentesis is typically performed between weeks 16 to 20 of your pregnancy.

Wishing you a  
healthy Pregnancy...

**United Health  
Professionals, Inc.**

**143 Peyton Street  
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# Amniocentesis, Cont....

## Is an Amniocentesis painful?

Most people tell us that they experience very little pain during their amniocentesis. You will lay down on the ultrasound table just as if you were having an ultrasound exam. The technician and physician will look for an appropriate location to withdraw the fluid. Your skin will be cleaned off and may be numbed for your comfort. The numbing feels like a small bee sting. A thin needle is used to retrieve the fluid sample from around the baby. Most people say they feel a "pressure" sensation as the needle goes in.

The whole procedure only takes a few minutes. We recommend you take it easy for the rest of the day, but you may resume normal activities the following day.

## What are the risks of Amniocentesis?

Complications of amniocentesis are rare. However, they include:

- Infection
- Miscarriage risk increases slightly after amniocentesis (1 in 200 chance)
- Leakage of amniotic fluid
- Contractions/ early labor
- Injury to the fetus
- Fluid could be lost or spilled requiring the exam to be repeated
- Failure to complete the amniocentesis procedure

### **IMPORTANT!**

**If your water breaks or if you experience bleeding, pain, more than 4 contractions in an hour, or fever over 100.4 degrees call our office immediately or go directly to Cabell Huntington Hospital.**

## When will I know the results?

It only takes a few hours to get the results of a lung maturity study. If you do not hear from our office within 4 hours, call our office for your test results.

It can take up to a few weeks to get the results of a genetic study. We will ask you to come in and talk to us to get your results whether the results are positive or negative. If you have not heard from our office in 3 weeks, call our office for your test results.

## What if the results are positive?

A news of a positive amniocentesis can be a difficult for a family. Your caregivers at United Health Professionals want to support you with education, counseling, referrals, and medical care that help you make the decisions that are appropriate for your individual situation. If we do not provide the services necessary to assist you, we will help you find those services elsewhere.

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