

After the amniocentesis:

We recommend you limit your daily activities for 24 hours after the amniocentesis.

Please avoid:

- Heavy lifting
- Exercise
- Cleaning
- Shopping
- Sexual intercourse

If you experience any of the following complications please call us immediately.

- Water leaking from your vagina
- Vaginal bleeding
- Excessive uterine cramping
(Some mild cramping is normal)
- Fever
- Persistent pain in the lower abdominal area.

We have a physician on call
24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Call (702) 341-6610



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Desert
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A
helpful
guide
to
Amniocentesis

Amniocentesis

With every pregnancy there is a 3-5% risk for a birth defect. For many of these problems there is not a known cause. However, we do know that some birth defects are caused by chromosome number problems.

Typically, every cell in our body has 23 pairs of chromosomes for a total of 46. If there is an extra chromosome it can cause certain birth defects. Three copies of chromosome number 21 result in Down syndrome, a common form of mental retardation. Rarer chromosome number problems include Trisomy 18 and Trisomy 13, which are associated with severe mental retardation and birth defects.

What is an amniocentesis?

The amniocentesis procedure removes a small amount of amniotic fluid that surrounds the baby in the uterus. This procedure gives us more information about the baby and the pregnancy.

Amniocentesis is the most common test used to diagnose or rule out chromosomal and genetic birth defects. It is most often completed in the second trimester between 15 and 20 weeks. Amniocentesis can also be performed later in the third trimester if necessary.

How is the amniocentesis performed?

The mother's abdomen is first swabbed with an iodine solution. Ultrasound is used to locate a pocket of fluid away from the baby. Using ultrasound guidance, a long thin needle is inserted through the mother's abdomen and uterus. A small amount of amniotic fluid is removed (about 2 tablespoons) and the needle is withdrawn. After the amniocentesis, ultrasound is used to check that the fetal heartbeat is normal. The entire procedure takes just a few minutes.

Some women feel mild cramping or pressure when the needle enters the uterus and others feel nothing at all.

Who is offered an amniocentesis?

Amniocentesis is not offered to everyone. It is only offered to women considered at an increased risk for a chromosome problem, genetic condition, or certain birth defects.

The common indications for amniocentesis include:

Maternal Age – The risk of having a child with a chromosome number problem increases with age. Amniocentesis is routinely offered to women who are 35 or older at the time of delivery.

Positive Screen Result – A First Trimester Screen or a Maternal Serum Screen (AFP) may indicate an increased risk for a chromosome number problem or spina bifida. Amniocentesis may be offered to rule out or diagnose these birth defects.

Abnormal Ultrasound – When certain markers or birth defects are seen on ultrasound it could indicate an increased risk for a chromosome problem or genetic condition. An amniocentesis may be offered to determine a possible cause for these ultrasound findings.

Previously Affected Pregnancy – If a chromosome/genetic abnormality or other birth defect was diagnosed in a child or previous pregnancy the mother may be offered amniocentesis for any future pregnancies.

Family History – A couple may be offered an amniocentesis if their baby is at risk of inheriting a genetic condition based on their family history. However, it is not possible to prenatally diagnose all genetic conditions.

Amniocentesis may also be used to determine:

Fetal lung maturity when premature delivery is necessary

Fetal infection

Fetal anemia in babies with Rh disease

How long do the results take?

The amniotic fluid contains cells from the baby. These cells can be grown in a laboratory and tested for chromosomal abnormalities or certain genetic conditions. Genetic test results are usually available in 2 weeks.

AFP, a chemical produced by the baby's liver, can also be measured in the amniotic fluid. AFP test results are available in just a few days. AFP can help diagnose certain birth defects of the baby's spine, such as spina bifida.

Is it a reliable test?

Amniocentesis is a very good test for diagnosing chromosome abnormalities – with an accuracy rate between 99 and 100%. However, it is important to note that a normal amniocentesis result does not guarantee a healthy baby; it can only rule out certain birth defects.

What are the risks?

There is a small risk for miscarriage following an amniocentesis. The risk is approximately 1 in 300 to 1/1600.

Possible complications following amniocentesis include fluid leakage from the vagina, spotting or bleeding, severe cramping and premature labor, or infection. However, every precaution is taken to minimize these risks.

Physician experience is also important in decreasing the risk of miscarriage. The physicians at Desert Perinatal Associates all have considerable experience with the amniocentesis procedure.

Should I have an amniocentesis?

The decision to have an amniocentesis is personal, based on your beliefs and concerns. The doctors and genetic counselors at Desert Perinatal Associates can help answer any further questions so you can make a decision that is right for you and your family.

