



### **What is amniocentesis?**

Amniocentesis is a diagnostic procedure most commonly performed between 16 and 20 weeks of pregnancy, but available from 16 weeks until the end of pregnancy. It involves using a needle, guided by ultrasound, to collect a small sample of amniotic fluid through the abdomen. The amniotic fluid contains fetal cells, which are then sent to a laboratory for analysis.

The collected cells may be cultured for up to 14 days or analyzed directly. Preliminary results (known as FISH analysis) on chromosomes 13, 18, 21, and sex chromosomes, are often available within 72 hours. Additional tests, such as karyotyping (chromosome count), chromosome microarray, tests for specific single gene disorders or congenital infections, as well as measurement of alpha-fetoprotein (AFP) levels to assess for neural tube defects, may also be performed depending on individual circumstances and reasons for testing.

### **What are benefits and risks of amniocentesis?**

- Benefits:** Early diagnosis, informed choices and preparation, improved medical care prenatally and postnatally
- Risks:**
- Miscarriage: There is a small risk (about 1 in 300 to 1 in 500) of miscarriage
  - Infection: Rarely, there may be a risk of infection in the uterus.
  - Injury to the fetus: Rarely, the needle used for amniocentesis can cause injury to the fetus.
  - Leaking Amniotic Fluid: A small amount of fluid may leak from the uterus after the procedure; this usually resolves on its own. Persistent leakage of fluid may occur in rare cases and can lead to pregnancy loss.

### **How to prepare for amniocentesis?**

No specific preparation is required before the procedure.

### **What to expect after amniocentesis?**

You may feel mild cramping, similar to menstrual cramps, which typically lasts a few hours and rarely extends beyond 24-72 hours.

### **Are there any restrictions after amniocentesis?**

For the first 72 hours post procedure, you should avoid lifting over 15 lbs, performing any strenuous activity or exercise, and avoid travel. Drink plenty of fluids.

### **When should I seek medical attention after amniocentesis?**

- Fever of 100.4°F or 38.0°C, or higher
- Bleeding heavier than a period
- Gush of fluid or continuous leakage of clear fluid (like water) from the vagina
- Severe abdominal pain

***If you have an emergency during the night or on the weekend, please contact your OB office to speak with the physician on call, or proceed to the nearest hospital ER for evaluation.***