

## 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



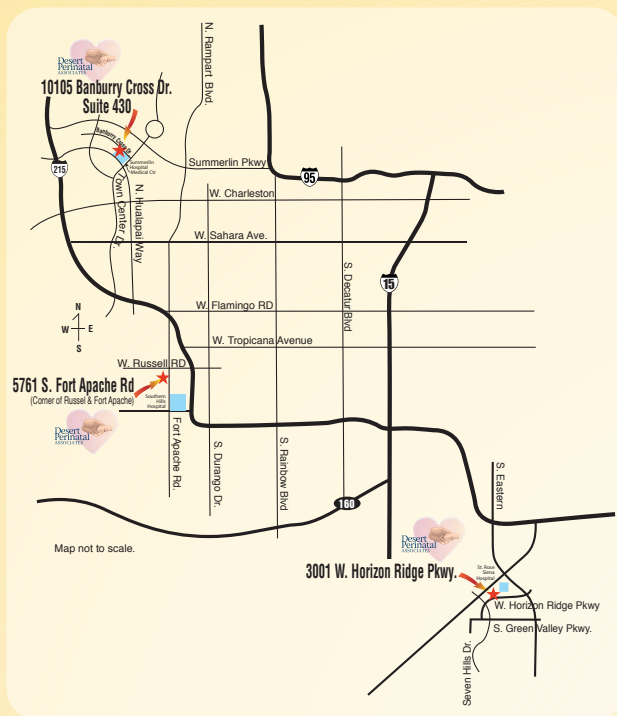
#### THREE LOCATIONS:

5761 S. Fort Apache Road  
Las Vegas, NV 89148  
(Corner of Russell Rd & Fort Apache)

10105 Banbury Cross Dr., Suite 430  
Las Vegas, NV 89144  
(Next to Summerlin Hospital)

3001 W. Horizon Ridge Pkwy.  
Henderson, NV 89052  
(Next to St. Rose Siena Hospital)

TELEPHONE (702) 341-6610  
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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 abnormalities.

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 chromosome abnormalities and other genetic birth defects. It is 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 primarily offered to women 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 may be offered to women who are 35 years or older at the time of delivery.

**Positive Screen Results** – A screening test may indicate an increased risk for a chromosome problem or spina bifida. Amniocentesis may be offered to rule out or diagnose these birth defects.

**Previously Affected Pregnancy** – If a chromosome/genetic abnormality or other birth defect was diagnosed in a child or a 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.

**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.

When multiple abnormalities are seen on ultrasound a genetic counselor at Desert Perinatal Associates may speak with you about the option of adding a microarray study. This test is completed on the initial sample of amniotic fluid; it does not require a second procedure. A microarray looks for small deletions of DNA or duplications of DNA that cannot be seen in standard chromosome studies. This additional testing may be useful if the baby is found to have a normal number of chromosomes, but a genetic condition is still suspected.

### 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 less than 2 weeks.

AFP, a chemical produced by the baby's liver, can also be measured in the amniotic fluid. Within a few days, amniotic fluid AFP levels can help diagnose spina bifida, an abnormality affecting the baby's spinal column.

## 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 1000.

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, and should be based on your own 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.