



## Should You Take Your Baby's Amniotic Fluid To The Bank?

By Monique Johnson

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If you're having amniocentesis at some point during your pregnancy, you may want to consider banking your amniotic fluid. That's the message behind National Amniotic Fluid Awareness Day this week and a new company called

Biocell which has recently launched its U.S operation. Researchers say just a few teaspoons can be set aside during an already planned amnio test and give your child protection because the stem cells are a perfect match (there is no rejection). Until now, banking cord blood was the only way to those precious stem cells



that cured blood related and other genetic diseases. But amniotic fluid can be used to grow many different organs and tissues: kidney, brain, muscle, liver and more. Research shows that these stem cells could potentially be used to repair cartilage in the knee, heal wounds or grow heart valves. "The technology to preserve amniotic fluid did not exist until relatively recently so, for decades, doctors and labs have discarded what has proven to be one of the richest, natural sources of stem cells," said Kate Torchilin, CEO of Biocell Center, an amniotic fluid banking company. "Amniotic fluid banking is the latest advance in stem cell preservation. Research with these stem cells is leading to significant medical discoveries, and the only way to take advantage is to plan ahead and preserve now." "Decisions about prenatal testing and stem cell banking can be overwhelming, so it is important for women who are pregnant or trying to conceive to learn about all their options and be empowered to make the right decision for themselves and their family's needs," said Elizabeth Battaglino Cahill, RN, Executive Director of HealthyWomen, the leader in independent health information for women. That means talk to your doctor and get all the facts. It is easy and safe to collect amniotic fluid throughout the entire pregnancy, as early as the second

trimester, because a little bit of it is already routinely collected during some prenatal tests, Torchilin says. A small amount meets the requirements, without any change to the prenatal test. The cost is \$1,650 plus \$120 per year for banking, but Biocell has programs to help families that want the services but can't afford the full cost. Get more information at [www.biocellcenter.com](http://www.biocellcenter.com)

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