

# New test discovers birth defects early

**United Press International**  
**CHICAGO** — A one-day method of detecting genetic defects in a fetus as early as the first 10 weeks of pregnancy would eventually replace amniocentesis, doctors say.

The new method developed in Europe is "earlier and faster" than amniocentesis, Dr. Eugene Pergament, medical genetics director at Michael Reese Hospital Medical Center, said Monday at a news conference.

Amniocentesis involves inserting a long needle through a woman's abdomen and taking a sample of fetal cells from amniotic fluid surrounding the fetus for analysis.

The procedure, which costs \$500 to \$800, is performed during the fourth and fifth months of pregnancy. It takes up to four weeks to get results.

A small plastic catheter is inserted through the vagina into the uterus. Guided by ultrasound, doctors move the catheter

to a specific location known as the chorionic villi. A small sample is withdrawn and sent to the laboratory for chromosome analysis.

Results are available within 24 hours and confirmation between three and seven days, Pergament said. The outpatient procedure requires no anesthesia.

Pergament said his group believes the new procedure "eventually will replace amniocentesis and that amniocentesis will serve as the back-up."

The Michael Reese doctors learned the chorionic villi sampling and genetic analysis technique from University College of London and the University of Milan, Italy. They are the first in the United States to use it but expect more institutions to start within the next month.

"It's going to take many years until the safety and risks have been determined," Pergament said, adding the risks probably

are similar to those of amniocentesis.

Criteria for using the test are the same as amniocentesis: women over age 35, parents who previously conceived a baby with chromosomal abnormalities and carriers of genetic diseases such as Nieman-Pick and Tay-Sachs — "progressive degenerative disorders for which there is no treatment," Pergament said.

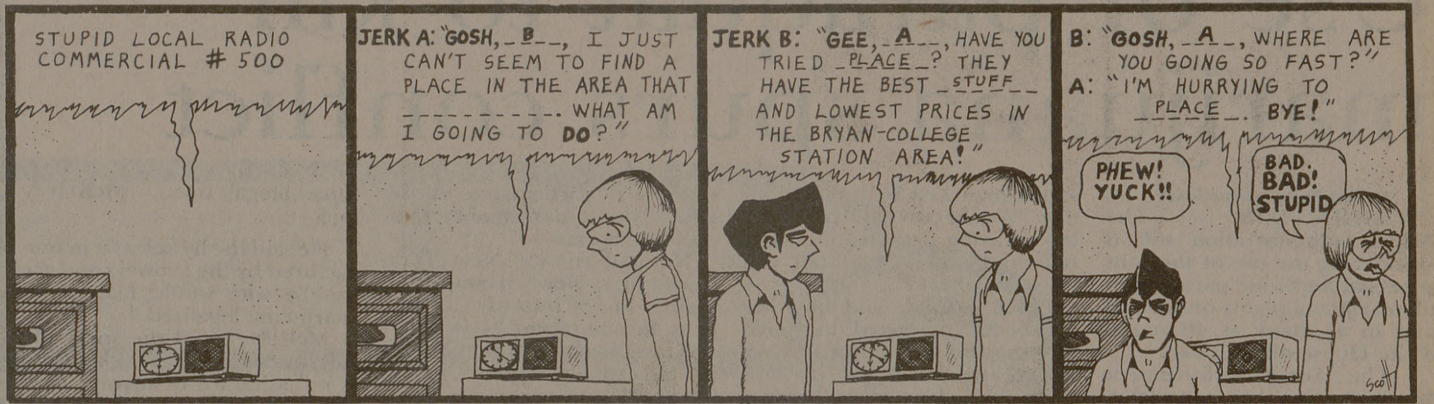
Abortion during the first trimester — rather than the second trimester following amniocentesis — represents a "significant reduction in the risk," Pergament said.

The technique also can determine the sex of the fetus but Pergament said he would not perform the test for that reason alone.

The new test costs about \$800. The United Nations World Health organization has established an international study of the new method.

## Warped

by Scott McCullar



# Bell contract talks may be key to stopping nationwide strike

**United Press International**  
 Representatives of the Bell System and 700,000 striking telephone workers bill Tuesday's formal contract talks — the first since the 10-day-old nationwide work stoppage began — as a chance to start building an agreement to end the walkout.

"Both sides — the unions and the Bell System — are still far apart in their positions," a

spokesman for American Telephone & Telegraph Co. said Monday. "But we both have agreed that meeting across the bargaining table might help define some areas of possible movement between the parties."

The company is holding separate bargaining sessions with two smaller unions.

Today's formal talks in

Washington follow several informal discussions between union officials and AT&T management.

AT&T supervisory workers have been filling in for striking phone workers to keep the system operating.

Lynn Blow, a dispatcher for the state police in Pontiac, Mich., estimated that one of every four callers per hour was looking for a phone number.

Isolated violence and vandalism has been reported since the strike began.

Vandals struck a telephone

junction box in the east Texas town of Marshall Monday, cutting off service to about 100 Southwestern Bell customers.

Pay and job security are the key issues in the strike by the 525,000 members of the CWA, 100,000 members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and 50,000 members of the Telecommunications International Union. Many of those issues center around the workers' futures following the planned spinoff of 22 Bell operating companies from AT&T early next year.

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