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am·ni·o·cen·te·sis  (ăm'nē-ō-sĕn-tē sĭs)

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n. pl. **am·ni·o·cen·te·ses** (-sēz)

A procedure in which a small sample of amniotic fluid is drawn out of the uterus through a needle inserted in the abdomen. The fluid is then analyzed to detect genetic abnormalities in the fetus or to determine the sex of the fetus.

[New Latin *amniocentēsis* : [AMNION](#) + Greek *kentēsis*, act of pricking (from *kentein*, to prick; see **kent-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#)).]

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Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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