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Another Step Toward Designer Babies

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A Massachusetts firm is now marketing the [Baby Gender Monitor](#), a home “gender test” that allows a woman to know the gender of her baby almost as soon as she knows she is pregnant. As [The Boston Globe](#) reports, “The \$275 test works by detecting and analyzing fetal DNA floating in the mother’s blood, a method that researchers say holds promise for serious clinical uses, from cancer testing to prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome.”

The test is for “the type of woman who can’t wait to open Christmas presents,” explained Sherry Bonelli, president of [Mommy’s Thinkin’](#), the firm that is offering the kit. For now, the product is available through an online pregnancy store. Clearly, the test brings new ethical challenges. America is already known around the world as a center for sex-selection technologies and the availability of abortion for virtually any reason. British firms even offer travel packages for those seeking technologies considered unethical or even illegal elsewhere. The [Baby Gender Monitor](#) opens the door to a mass-produced system of gender selection.

Bioethicist [Arthur Caplan](#) of the [University of Pennsylvania](#) was clear in his denunciation of the test. ““You can tiptoe around it, but the fact is that if you’re sending information about sex, then you’re in the sex-selection testing business,” he said.

NON-GENDER-SELECTED LINK: Carey Goldberg, [Test Reveals Gender Early in Pregnancy](#), [The Boston Globe](#), Monday, June 27, 2005. See also an undated video segment from [NBC’s Today Show](#).

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