

Britain says yes to 3-parent babies

6th Febraury, 2015



Lawmakers in the U.K. have voted to allow doctors to create babies from the DNA of three different people. It will be the first country in the world to do this. There was a vote in Britain's

parliament, where 382 lawmakers voted for allowing three-person babies and 128 voted against the idea. The idea behind three-person babies is to stop diseases being passed from a mother to her newborn baby. Doctors say that as many as 150 babies a year could be born using the new technique. The first baby to be born using the DNA from three people could be as early as next year. The technique will help families with mitochondrial diseases. These are incurable and affect about one in 6,500 children worldwide.

The technique is quite simple. It combines the DNA of the two parents with the DNA of another woman. Doctors replace the unhealthy, disease-carrying DNA in the mother's egg with healthy DNA from the donor. The result is that the baby receives about 0.1 per cent of its DNA from the donor woman. Lawmakers said the technique was "light at the end of a dark tunnel" for many families. Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron said: "We're not playing God here. We're just making sure that two parents who want a healthy baby can have one." Critics say the technique could be dangerous. They say it would open the door to the genetic modification of children and "designer babies" in the future.

Sources: BBC / The Scotsman / Scientific American

Writing

We should never mix the DNA of three people to make a baby. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

lawmakers / DNA / parliament / diseases / newborn / technique / incurable / worldwide / simple / unhealthy / mother's egg / donor / dark tunnel / parents / dangerous

True / False

- Doctors in the UK will soon create babies from the DNA of 3 people. T / F
- Fewer than 100 lawmakers voted against 3-person babies. T / F
- Doctors say 150 three-person babies could be born next year. T / F
- The DNA technique could possibly help 6,500 children a year. T / F
- The DNA technique is a very risky and difficult one. T / F
- The baby gets about 1% of its DNA from a female donor. T / F
- Mothers have to sit in a dark tunnel while DNA is replaced. T / F
- Critics warn of the dangers of "designer babies". T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 1. allow | a. effect |
| 2. create | b. prevent |
| 3. stop | c. method |
| 4. passed | d. hazardous |
| 5. incurable | e. let |
| 6. technique | f. given |
| 7. result | g. certain |
| 8. sure | h. make |
| 9. dangerous | i. lead to |
| 10. open the door to | j. untreatable |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you think about what you read?
- Do you think it is bad to create babies in this way?
- What do you know about DNA?
- Is this technique OK if it stops diseases?
- What are the dangers of this technique?
- Why did so many lawmakers vote for this idea?
- How would you vote, and why?
- What is the best thing about babies?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. create babies | a. to her newborn baby |
| 2. 128 voted | b. modification |
| 3. passed from a mother | c. from the DNA |
| 4. as early | d. simple |
| 5. affect about one in 6,500 | e. a dark tunnel |
| 6. The technique is quite | f. as next year |
| 7. DNA in the mother's | g. babies |
| 8. light at the end of | h. children worldwide |
| 9. genetic | i. egg |
| 10. designer | j. against the idea |

Discussion – Student B

- How natural or unnatural is this technique?
- How might the baby change if it has the donor's DNA?
- Why is this "light at the end of the tunnel"?
- What do you think of genetic modification of humans?
- Are doctors "playing God" here?
- Would you like to choose what your baby looks like?
- What do you think of designer babies?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Spelling

- allow doctors to tracee babies
- stop esaised
- ronbenw baby
- using the new ihtqecneu
- These are eraulbicn
- 6,500 children rdloewwid
- The ehqnituce is quite simple
- DNA from the onrdo
- light at the end of a dark enlnut
- parents who want a laeythh baby
- icntege modification
- nesigder babies

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. b	4. f	5. j
6. c	7. a	8. g	9. d	10. i

Role Play

Role A – Clothes

You think the best present for a baby is clothes. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their presents aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): a teddy bear, a blanket or baby music.

Role B – Teddy bear

You think a teddy bear is the best present for a baby. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their presents aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): clothes, a blanket or baby music.

Role C – Blanket

You think a blanket is the best present for a baby. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their presents aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): a teddy bear, clothes or baby music.

Role D – Baby music

You think baby music is the best present for a baby. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their presents aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): a teddy bear, a blanket or clothes.

Speaking – Baby gift

Rank these with your partner. Put the best gifts at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| • clothes | • blanket |
| • rattle | • Pampers |
| • teddy bear | • spa voucher for Mum |
| • iPad | • baby music |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.