

Couples to test embryos for cancer gene

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Two British couples want to use an embryo selection technique to eradicate a breast cancer gene that runs in their families.

Scientists say screening for the defective BCRA1 gene would reduce the likelihood of cancer, The (London) Guardian reported Friday.

The London Times said an application to test for the breast cancer gene was submitted Thursday by a doctor at University College Hospital.

The newspaper said Britain's Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority has already agreed to it in principle. The application is expected to be approved within four months.

The couples will have in vitro fertilization, and a single cell will be removed from the embryos at the eight-cell stage and tested for the BRCA1 gene. Only unaffected embryos would be transferred to the women's wombs, The Guardian said.

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