

## S. Korea approves sales of new stem cell drug

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South Korea's government drug agency cleared the way Thursday for commercial sales of what it called the world's first approved medicine using stem cells collected from other people.

Cartistem, developed by Seoul-based Medipost, will help regenerate knee cartilage using [stem cells](#) developed from newborns' umbilical cord blood, the Korea [Food and Drug Administration](#) said.

"Cartistem is... the world's first approved allogeneic (taken from different individuals of the same species) stem cell drug, that can offer new opportunity for treatment of patients with degenerative arthritis," the administration said in a statement.

Medipost said 27 billion won (\$23.8 million) from private investors and [government funds](#) had been invested to develop Cartistem since 2001. The drug can be injected into a patient's knees via surgery.

Clinical trials have been under way in the United States since last year, the statement said.

Two of the world's top 10 drugmakers are in talks to seek a worldwide licence to make the drug, a Medipost spokesman told AFP, adding that final trials involving a large number of people would likely begin in the US in 2015.

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