

## South Korean Scientists Make Major Breakthrough in Stem Cell Research

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*Scientists in South Korea have made a major medical breakthrough in stem cell research. They have created the first human cells that are customized to specific patients.*

Sabrina Cohen was 14 when she was paralyzed in a car accident. This discovery could change her life. She says, "it could restore my ability to walk again."

And she is not alone. Scientists say it could lead to cures for Alzheimer's and other degenerative diseases.

Here's how it works: Researchers take a skin cell from a patient with an illness and extract the DNA, the body's genetic code. The DNA is then injected into a specially prepared donated egg, which develops into an embryo genetically identical to the patient. That embryo is full of stem cells, building blocks for everything the body needs, muscles, eye cells or in Sabrina's case, healthy nerve cells for her spinal cord.

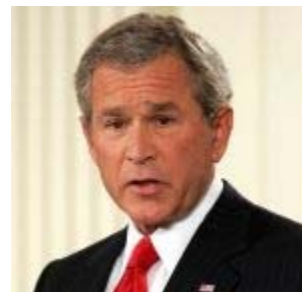
John Gearhart is a stem cell researcher at Johns Hopkins University. He says, "If you have a heart attack, stroke, when you grow new cells, they will integrate and repair the person's injury.

But creating a cloned embryo is still very controversial work. Opponents, including Dave Prentice of the Family Research Council, are criticizing the discovery. Mr. Prentice says, "You are creating cloned human embryos, clone human beings for destruction, simply for experiments. And today's results make that more likely."

It is also reigniting the political debate over stem cell research in the United States. The U.S. House of Representatives could vote next week on a bill that would broaden the limits on government funds for embryonic stem cell research. In 2001 U.S. President George W. Bush restricted stem cell research, authorizing the use of federal funds only for research on existing stem cells. On Friday, the president said he opposes expanding those limits.

"But I made it very clear to the Congress that the use of federal money, taxpayers' money, to promote science which destroys life in order to save life is - I'm against that. And therefore, if the bill does that, I will veto it," says president Bush.

Scientists say it will be five to ten years before they are ready to test this stem cell therapy on patients.





**George W. Bush**