



Donor Eggs/Being a Donor/Using Donor Eggs

fertility
NEW ZEALAND

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The donation of eggs (often known as oocytes) is a generous gift to couples who, because they are not able to produce their own eggs, may only achieve a pregnancy by using donated eggs or sperm.

Who are the donors?

Donors may come to the clinic in one of two ways. 'Clinic recruited' may have seen advertising and offered to be donors for a couple on the clinic list. These donors will be between 21 and 35 years old and will preferably have finished their family. Some couples chose to do their own advertising to ensure they have first choice of any respondents.

Sometimes couples bring their own donor to the clinic, this is often a faster way of accessing donor treatment. It is possible for the personal donors to be a little older than 35 as long as donors and recipients accept the issues involved.

New Zealand Legal Situation

In New Zealand donors are expected to be available for the donor children or their families to seek information in the future. The laws, currently being drafted, are likely to include a central register of offspring and their donors. At 18 years of age (or younger in special circumstances) the donor children will be able to locate their donor. Clinics suggest some counselling support for the offspring and their donors to help make the meeting successful.

Who requires Donor eggs

Women whose ovaries have stopped working (ovarian failure) or women who do not have ovaries will require donor eggs to achieve a pregnancy. Donor eggs may be used by women with genetic disorders that may affect a child. Women who have had treatment, such as chemotherapy, which stops the functioning of their ovaries, may also need donor eggs.

Being a donor

There are important issues to be considered prior to being a donor. When you first ring the clinic to express an interest you will be sent

information about some of the issues and the process of IVF. If you decide to investigate further, appointments will be made for you with the doctor, counsellor and nurse. These appointments will provide you with the opportunity to consider all aspects of being a donor, and allow the clinic to check that being a donor will not have a detrimental effect on you.

There are a number of screening tests for you to complete, these will ensure you are in the good health necessary to be a donor. There is a period of 'quarantine' before your donation is used. This allows you to complete all the clinic procedures and also gives you time to reflect on your decision.

Each donor will provide eggs for one recipient couple. Staff at the clinic will work with you to help you describe the sort of people you wish to donate to. You will see their profile prior to beginning the treatment. Sometimes donor and recipients chose to meet at the clinic in a nonidentifying way. While this reduces your confidentiality it also helps you feel comfortable about the couple you are donating to.

Being a donor requires having an IVF cycle. The goal of IVF is to use drugs to stimulate your ovaries to produce a number of eggs. You will be taught by the nurses to administer the daily injections used to stimulate the growth of eggs. There are some risks attached to an IVF cycle to consider - staff will ensure you understand these risks.

The eggs are collected and fertilized in the laboratory with the recipient man's sperm. The embryos created are replaced in the recipient woman's uterus to hopefully grow into a child. The clinic will monitor your well being to ensure your body settles down after the IVF cycle.

The donor does not have any obligation or rights to the children born as a result of donor egg. The children born as a result of donor egg cannot make any claims on the donor in the future.

Using donor eggs

It is very distressing for a couple to discover they will require eggs from another woman if they are to achieve a pregnancy. Couples

need to work with their counsellor to deal with the grief involved before they begin donor egg treatment.

Donor egg offers these couples an opportunity to experience the pregnancy and birth of the child they will bring up. Some of these couples will feel more comfortable using someone they know as a donor (family member or friend), for others it is better to be anonymous. Many couples do not know anyone they feel they could ask to be a donor.

The recipient couple will work closely with the doctor, counsellor and nurse at the clinic to consider all the implications of the treatment. The children of this family will need to know their genetic origin or information at some stage. It is important that the recipient couple have thought through all aspects so they can feel confident about their decision and enjoy their children.

While the donor is doing her IVF cycle the recipient woman has her cycle matched so that the embryos are able to be put back into an optimal environment in the uterus. The male of the couple will need to provide sperm for fertilization. The clinic will guide you both to make this the best possible situation.

When couples make the decision to have a child they develop dreams and expectations about this child. Being faced with the reality that they will not be able to have a child that is fully genetically theirs means they have to reshape their dreams and expectations. While the donation of eggs is relatively recent the families created as a result of this generous gift are enjoying their lives together. Donating eggs is an act of kindness and generosity which brings great happiness to the recipient family.

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