

If you are considering being an egg donor, this fact sheet will give you an overview of what is involved, outline some of the issues you should consider, and help you decide if egg donation is for you.

## THE FACTS ABOUT:

# Egg donation – getting started

Donating eggs is a big decision as well as a very generous one. At Life Fertility Clinic we will do all we can to answer your questions and help make this process straightforward for you, but please understand that the preparations are quite time-consuming as we need to protect you and the people who will receive your eggs.

If you would like more information about the medical procedures involved and/or you have already embarked on the path of becoming an egg donor, our fact sheet *Egg donation – treatment in detail*, will give you more information.

## Why donate eggs?

Most women who offer to donate their eggs do so because they want to help another person experience the joy of having a family. For women who can't produce their own eggs or whose eggs aren't suitable, donated eggs can be the key to making pregnancy possible.

The reasons people may need your donated eggs to realise their dream of having a family include:

- Women who have gone through premature menopause
- Women whose ovaries have failed after chemotherapy or radiotherapy treatment
- Women who have no ovaries due to malformation or surgery
- Women who have previously had a poor ovarian response to hormonal stimulation
- Women who have poor egg numbers or quality due to age or other conditions
- Women who want to avoid passing on a genetic disorder that they carry to their children
- Single men or same sex male couples who want to have their own family.

## Who can be a donor?

It is incredibly generous of anyone to consider donating their eggs however in order to protect everyone involved (you the donor; the potential future parents and any resulting children), we're sure you understand that it's important for us to be quite careful in accepting donors.

To be accepted as a donor you must:

- Be aged between 21 and 35 years old and preferably have completed your own family. You can be older than 35 if you are donating for friend or family member but your recipient should understand the implications of using an older donor.
- Be able to give a full medical history and know your own biological origins if you are an adoptee.
- Be able to produce formal identification such as a Medicare card, driver's license or passport.
- Attend a consultation with a Life Fertility Clinic doctor where your personal, medical and reproductive history will be reviewed.

(Once all your initial screenings, questionnaires, counselling and consents have been completed, the doctor will give final medical clearance for your donation).

- Attend an education session with an IVF nurse coordinator and complete questionnaires on lifestyle, family and medical history in order to rule out the possibility of an inherited condition or transmissible infection being passed on.
- Attend at least two counselling sessions with our associated counsellor (with your partner, if you have one) to make sure you have fully explored what this may mean for you.
- Be screened (with your partner if you have one) for a range of infectious diseases including HIV, Hepatitis B and C, HTLV 1 and 2, and Syphilis.
- Be screened for cystic fibrosis, karyotype, blood group and any genetic conditions prevalent in your racial group.
- Have repeat blood tests for infectious diseases six months after the first tests.

- Consent to Life Fertility Clinic contacting other fertility clinics to verify your donation history if you have one.
- Consent to egg donation and treatment and to Life Fertility Clinic storing identifying details and non-identifying details about you on our donor register. Your partner if you have one must consent to your donation too.
- Agree to your identifying information being released to any children conceived using your eggs when they reach 18 years old, if they request to know.

## Will I know who gets my eggs?

You can choose to donate for a family member or friend but you can also be an anonymous egg donor, where you and the woman who uses the eggs will not be identified to each other. Life Fertility Clinic will co-ordinate both known and anonymous donation for you.

## What does the donation program involve?

The first step is to fully understand all the implications of being a donor – these include medical considerations, the legal situation and emotional concerns. You can have an introductory discussion with our IVF Nurse Coordinator.

Before you can go ahead, you will need blood tests, genetic testing and our compulsory counselling sessions. If you have a partner, he/she will need to be involved and will be asked to have screening blood tests to ensure there are no diseases that you could transmit.

When you are accepted as a potential donor for someone unknown to you, you will then go on our donor register together with details that allow us to match you with a woman who needs donated eggs.

If you are matched and are ready to go ahead, you will need to go through hormonal stimulation and egg collection in the same way as someone undergoing IVF, with the difference that your cycle might need to be synchronised with the woman who will receive the eggs.

Unfortunately you cannot donate surplus eggs while you are going through your own fertility treatment. If you are having treatment yourself, it means that you haven't completed your own family which is one of our egg donor requirements.

## How are egg donors and recipients matched?

If you are donating eggs anonymously, the woman who is considering receiving the eggs is given your profile. This includes non-identifying details such as physical characteristics (hair and eye colour, height, weight, build, complexion, race), blood group, career, lifestyle information and education.

As there are not many egg donors, we often have a waiting list of women hoping for an egg donor so you are likely to be matched quite quickly after volunteering to donate.

## Is there payment for egg donation?

No. It is illegal in Australia to receive payment for egg donation, but the person who receives the eggs will cover the costs of the treatment cycle where your eggs are retrieved. They may also elect to refund your reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. Please keep your receipts for this purpose.

## What does the mandatory counselling involve?

You (and your partner, if you have one) must attend a minimum of two confidential counselling sessions with a Life Fertility Clinic counsellor. This gives you the opportunity to talk through what it means for you and your families and to make sure you fully understand your rights and the situations that could arise in the future as a result of your donation.

It also gives us a chance to get to know you and assess whether you would be a suitable donor. As much as we really appreciate your willingness to be an egg donor, we don't want to take on anyone who may find it too challenging to deal with the physical and emotional aspects of donation.

Most women find it very helpful to explore their feelings about donating and to consider how it may affect their life now and in the future.

If the recipient of your eggs is known to you, you will also be required to have a joint counselling session with them.

## Can I change my mind after I have consented?

Yes. Before treatment can begin, there is a mandatory minimum two-week 'cooling off' period after you have completed all the paperwork and your counselling sessions.

You can withdraw or change your consent at any time before insemination of the eggs. Insemination happens a few hours after the eggs have been collected from you.

Once insemination has occurred, you cannot change your mind and you do not have any legal rights or responsibilities with regard to any embryos created, over any pregnancies or over any children born as a result of your donation.

If you change your mind at any time, please let us know as soon as possible.

## What are my other legal rights?

As we've already mentioned, you can change or withdraw your consent to be a donor at any time up to the time of insemination of the eggs.

Once insemination has occurred, any embryos or babies that result from your donation legally belong to the person or couple who received your eggs. They have full responsibility and rights with regard to the embryo(s), through the pregnancy and through the child's life. Their name(s) will appear on the birth certificate.



When you are consenting to the egg donation though, you will be asked to consider how you feel about the recipients of your eggs themselves donating embryos that were created using your eggs to someone else in the future. As this could result in additional families being created using your eggs, you are entitled to decide whether you want the recipient to have this option.

When a child conceived using your eggs reaches 18 years old, they are entitled to ask Life Fertility Clinic for your identifying details and may try to trace you for medical or other reasons. The information we will release will be that which we were given at the time of donation and may include name, date of birth, address and medical history.

If we are contacted we will endeavour to let you know that we have received this request and will be releasing this information about you.

If you have donated anonymously, you may also ask us for non-identifying details about who has received your eggs and the number and gender of any children born.

## What are the chances that donated eggs will result in a baby?

Life Fertility Clinic has excellent IVF results and many families have been created thanks to our generous egg donors, but donating eggs does not always guarantee a baby. Occasionally the eggs we collect are not suitable. There are usually some fertilised eggs that do not survive to the blastocyst (5-day) stage which is the embryo stage that is put back into the uterus.

On average we usually collect about 10 eggs from an egg donor, and from these there is a very good chance that there will be one or more embryos that is suitable to transfer to the recipient. After that, we wait to see if the pregnancy is successfully established.

## Can I donate more than once?

Yes, you are welcome to donate more than once to the same recipient. You can also donate to more than one recipient but there is a limit on the number of families that can be created.

This is a requirement of our licence. For both known and anonymous egg donors, it is Life Fertility Clinic policy that all egg donors are limited wherever possible to their eggs being used to create no more than 5 families in Queensland (including their own).

Life Fertility Clinic keeps a record of all egg donors. On this donor register we will record your details, any children that you have had of your own, previous donations and babies born as a result of your donation with us. This is also why IVF clinics communicate with one another about a donor's donation history.

## Will treatment for egg donation fit into my life?

Once you are matched and/or have completed all the preliminary requirements, the IVF treatment that you will undergo will require you to take medication and may last for a period of between six weeks and three months with approximately four visits to our clinic. This will depend of course on how many cycles you decide to undertake.

The egg collection itself is done under sedation and you will need to take a day off work for that. It is possible to negotiate exactly when treatment begins once everything is in place so that we can minimise the impact on your life.

## Treatment pathway

- Obtain a referral from your GP.
- Make an appointment for your consultation with a Life Fertility Clinic specialist.
- Attend a mandatory 1 hour education session with a Nurse Coordinator.
- Attend two counselling sessions with a Life Fertility Clinic counsellor to discuss the implications of donating eggs (partners must attend sessions).
- Attend blood screening tests, complete medical and lifestyle questionnaire, and consent forms (both donor and partner).
- Begin treatment when matched with recipient.

See our *Egg donation – treatment in detail* fact sheet for a full explanation of the treatment process and medical procedures.

## Support groups

### Australian Donor Conception Network

Email: [donorconceptionnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:donorconceptionnetwork@gmail.com)

Website: [www.australiandonorconceptionnetwork.org](http://www.australiandonorconceptionnetwork.org)

The Australian Donor Conception Network is a self-funding organisation run by volunteers and has been in existence since 1993. The membership is made up of people considering or using donor sperm, egg or embryos, those who already have children conceived on donor programs, adult donor offspring and donors.

The Australian Donor Conception Network provides support, help and research assistance.

### Access

Email: [info@access.org.au](mailto:info@access.org.au)

Website: [www.access.org.au](http://www.access.org.au)

Access is a consumer based, independent, non profit organisation committed to being a national voice in promoting the wellbeing and welfare of infertile people of all ages.

## Contact Life Fertility Clinic

The friendly and professional team at Life Fertility Clinic are keen to answer any questions about our egg donor program.

**THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING BECOMING AN EGG DONOR. IT COULD MEAN THE WORLD TO SOMEONE.**