

If you are considering donating eggs and want more information or have already been accepted on our register of donors, this fact sheet explains the process and the medical procedures that are involved in more detail.

THE FACTS ABOUT:

Egg donation – treatment in detail

If you would like to know more, one of our specialists, nursing or scientific staff will be happy to answer your questions. Our *Egg donation – getting started* fact sheet explains all the things you need to consider before becoming a donor.

You may be donating eggs for a friend or family member or you may have been accepted as a potential donor for someone unknown to you. Whichever path you are generously taking, once you 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. Life Fertility Clinic Nurse Coordinators will guide you through the process which may take 6-12 weeks.

The various stages of the process are as follows:

1. Synchronisation phase

We may need to synchronise your menstrual cycle with that of the woman who will receive the eggs. This is so that your eggs are can be produced and fertilised and the embryos are ready to implant at the time her body is ready to receive them.

If we need to synchronise, we will manage the synchronisation by giving you the oral contraceptive pill when your period starts. You will continue on the pill for a minimum of three weeks. Your Nurse Coordinator will tell you how long to take it before stopping and waiting for your next period.

2. Stimulation phase

Once your cycle has been hormonally regulated, we stimulate your ovaries so that they produce more egg-containing follicles than usual. The growth of the ovarian follicles is nurtured with a daily injection of follicle stimulating hormone (FSH: Puregon, Gonal F or Bempfol). You can do this injection yourself after instructions from the Nurse Coordinator. You may also be asked to have some additional injections to stop you ovulating early.

There are various other methods of regulating your cycle and stimulating egg production and your doctor will recommend the method that is most appropriate for you.

3. Monitoring the treatment

When you have been taking the follicle stimulating hormone for the prescribed amount of time, one of our IVF specialists will do an ultrasound scan to measure the size and number of the developing follicles, which contain the eggs. This scan uses a vaginal probe, does not require a full bladder, is painless and lasts for only a few minutes.

At this appointment, the IVF specialist may also adjust the medication dose to minimise any side effects for you and ensure there are sufficient eggs for collection. You must then continue administering your injections until advised to stop by your doctor or Nurse Coordinator (usually on the day of your trigger – see below).

Please bring all your medications to Life Fertility Clinic for each appointment.

4. The trigger

Another ultrasound scan 8-12 days after starting the stimulation medication will check whether the follicles have reached the right size and if there are enough of them. If so, your IVF doctor or the Nurse Coordinator will make an appointment for the egg collection.

The doctor or nurse will also explain how to give yourself the a 'trigger' (nasal spray or injection), which helps the eggs reach final maturity.

You normally use this trigger late in the evening 36 hours before egg collection. The Nurse Coordinator will give you instructions to read about the trigger and egg collection times. It is very important you read them and follow them carefully as the timing is crucial. If you have any questions, please get in touch with the Nurse Coordinator.



5. Day of egg collection

You must not eat or drink for six hours before your egg collection procedure.

You will be asked to come to the Life Fertility Clinic IVF theatre an hour and a half before the time of your egg collection procedure.

Our friendly day theatre staff will do the admission paperwork and prepare you for the egg collection. Just before collection, you will meet the anaesthetist who will sedate you for about 30 minutes.

We collect your eggs via your vagina, using the ultrasound probe (as used during scanning) to guide a fine needle into the follicles. The eggs are then extracted by suction and flushing.

When you wake up from the anaesthetic, the recovery nursing staff will take care of you and the Life Fertility Clinic nurse will tell you how many eggs were collected.

You will be discharged into the care of Life Fertility Clinic about two hours after your egg collection. One of our IVF nurse coordinators will review you and you must be discharged into the care of an adult. You must not drive for 24 hours and you should rest for the remainder of the day.

6. After the egg collection

After your procedure you may experience some abdominal discomfort similar to period pain. Paracetamol will usually control this and it normally improves in 2-3 days. We advise that you continue regular pain relief (if needed) every 4-6 hours after egg collection.

You may experience some vaginal bleeding. This should get less after a few hours. If, for any reason, you have unusually strong abdominal pain, prolonged bleeding or feel faint, please don't hesitate to contact Life Fertility Clinic.

Excessive abdominal pain or bloating, vomiting or shortness of breath could be symptoms of ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome (see below) and you must contact your IVF doctor or the IVF Nurse Coordinators at Life Fertility Clinic (if after hours, contact the clinic or your Life Fertility Clinic doctor).

7. Preventing pregnancy after egg collection

There is a possibility that your body may naturally release additional eggs after the egg collection process, which means you could easily still get pregnant yourself! We advise you not to have sexual intercourse before your next period.

8. Risks and setbacks during treatment

Like most medical procedures, egg collection and the associated medications have some risks. You will be closely monitored throughout your treatment cycle and your doctor will explain any risks or problems that arise during treatment.

During the stimulation phase

There is a possibility that your ovaries will not be stimulated enough. If there are three or fewer follicles developing, your doctor may advise stopping the cycle and reviewing the situation before trying again.

Although new protocols for stimulation mean OHSS is now very rare, if during your ultrasound scan, the doctor sees that a very large number of follicles are developing there is a possibility that the doctor may advise stopping the cycle and reducing the medication when trying again.

During egg collection

In normal circumstances approximately 75% of follicles contain eggs and 85% of eggs collected are mature and ready to be used for IVF. Rarely, no eggs are collected (empty follicle syndrome) or all of the eggs are abnormal. All useable eggs are immediately used for insemination after the egg collection.

After egg collection

Ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome (OHSS) is a rare side effect of IVF. It is a condition where there are too many eggs and this causes the ovaries to enlarge and fluid to collect in the pelvis and even in the lungs. While Life Fertility Clinic specialists do everything possible to prevent this and stop cycles that may put you at risk, it is important to be aware of the symptoms.

The trigger injection that is now used puts you at very low risk of developing OHSS, however in the unlikely event it does occur, it will begin 3-4 days after the egg collection. You may experience pain, a bloated feeling and mild abdominal swelling. In a small number of women, the discomfort can be quite intense.

The majority of women have a mild or moderate form of the syndrome that gets better within a few days but may delay recovery from egg collection.

Very rarely the ovarian hyperstimulation is severe and the ovaries are very swollen causing nausea, vomiting and pain. These severe cases need urgent hospital admission to restore the fluid and electrolyte balance and to monitor progress and pain relief.

Support groups

Australian Donor Conception Network

Email: donorconceptionnetwork@gmail.com

Website: 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
Website: 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 BEING AN EGG DONOR. IT COULD MEAN THE WORLD TO SOMEONE.