

# Egg Donation *Information for Donors*



## **Introduction**

This leaflet has been designed to help those who are considering donating their eggs to help other women who are unable to produce or use their own. It should help you to understand the purpose of the techniques that are used during the donation process as well as the techniques themselves.

If this booklet does not succeed in answering all of your questions about donating your eggs, please feel free to speak to a member of the nursing team at the Centre (Tel: 01743 261202).

## **The history of egg donation**

Whilst sperm donation has been taking place for over 100 years, only with recent scientific and medical advances such as IVF has it become possible for women to donate eggs. In the past this meant that women with no eggs or whose eggs were very poor quality and families in which inherited disorders were common had to remain childless. Egg donation now gives these individuals the chance to have a family of their own.

A couple in this situation can have a donated egg fertilised with the male partner's sperm outside of the woman's body (In-Vitro Fertilisation) and then have it transferred back into the woman's womb. For more information on IVF please see our patient information booklet.

## **Why is egg donation needed?**

There are many medical conditions that might make it necessary for donor eggs to be used. These include:-

- Premature menopause (usually classed as menopause before the age of 40)
- Poor response to ovarian stimulation at previous attempts at assisted conception
- Infertility caused by the removal of both ovaries or from chemo/radiotherapy treatment.
- Inherited disorders in the family of the female partner

## **Egg donation and the law**

Any child born as a result of an egg donation will be the legal child of the recipient, not the donor. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) keeps a register of all egg and sperm donors as well as all treatments using donated eggs or sperm.

Egg donors are anonymous from the patients who receive their eggs. As a donor they will not know the identity of the patients who receive their eggs and they will not know your identity.

Patients receiving donor eggs are given information on the characteristics of the donor such as eye colour, hair colour, blood group etc and non identifiable information about yourself that you provide.

If (they) you donate 'anonymously' only Centre staff and the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority will know your identity. Any child born as a result of donor egg treatment will have the right to contact the HFEA at the age of 16 at which time they will be entitled to receive the *following non-identifying information*:-

- Physical description (height, weight and eye hair and skin colours)
- Year and Country of birth
- Ethnic group
- Whether the donor had any genetic children when they registered and the number and sex of those children
- The number, gender and year of birth of any half/full siblings they may have
- Other details you the donor may have chosen to supply (e.g. occupation, (religion) belief systems and interests)
- Ethnic group(s) of the donor's parents
- Whether the donor was adopted or donor conceived (if they are aware of this)
- Marital status (at the time of donation)
- Details of any screening tests and medical history
- Skills
- Reason for donating
- A goodwill message
- A description of themselves as a person (pen portrait)

Any child born as a result of donor egg treatment will have the right to contact the HFEA at the age of 18 at which time they will be entitled to receive *identifying* information (after appropriate counselling and notification of yourself) which will include:-

- Donors full name (and any previous names)
- Date of birth and town or district where born
- Last known postal address
- Last known postal address (or address at time of registration)

Donors now have the right to access by law information about the number, gender and year of birth of any children born as a result of their donation. This information is currently available to donors as a discretionary right from the Authority.

The donor will not have any obligations towards such children however and the couple being treated will still be the legal parents.

## **Donor Screening**

After a woman has been counselled and accepted as a potential donor she must undergo a 'screening' programme. This is done to ensure that she has no infections or genetic conditions that might be passed on to the recipient or her baby.

We will take a medical and family history and perform a general examination. We will also ask for the donor's permission to contact her GP for a more detailed medical history.

The donor must provide blood samples to determine whether they have any infections such as hepatitis B core antibody, Hep B surface antigen & HEP C, syphilis, HIV , CMV & HTLV 1&2 and their Chromosomes and Cystic Fibrosis status checked. The donor will also have a cervical swab to test for Gonorrhoea and Chlamydia

The implications of being tested for HIV 1&2 are discussed with the patient prior to the test being taken. The results of the tests are confidential and are only made known to the donor. Without her written permission her GP cannot even be informed.

## **What treatment is involved for the donor?**

An egg donor will basically receive the same treatment as a patient undergoing IVF, with the main difference being that the donor will not have any embryos replaced in her uterus.

Treatment involves the suppression of the ovaries followed by (an) artificial stimulation. The doctor will decide which protocol best suits you. During this time we will need to perform 4—6 trans-vaginal ultrasound scans and blood tests to determine the growth of the follicles.

The egg collection is performed under conscious intravenous sedation and pain relief. If an anonymous donor is used, in general the eggs are divided equally between two recipient couples.

We ensure that the rights of the unborn child conceived after egg donation are carefully considered during consultations.

## **Matching the Donor to the Recipient – in anonymous donation**

As far as possible we try to match the general physical characteristics of the donor to those of the recipient. The characteristics we try to match are:-

- Height
- Weight
- Build
- Hair Colour
- Eye Colour
- Complexion
  
- Ethnic Background

We always attempt to match blood group. Obviously it is not always possible to get an exact match, but we try our best to get it as close as possible.

### **Will I have to pay to donate?**

No. All medical expenses will be covered by the recipient or NHS.

### **Do I Get Paid to Donate?**

From 1st April 2012, the donor can be compensated up to £750 to cover expenses and loss of earnings with the provision to claim an excess to cover higher expenses if the centre feels that it is a reasonable. The centre may only provide excess expenses (such as travel, accommodation or childcare) which are reasonable; do not include loss of earnings; have been incurred by the donor in connection with the donation of gametes provided to the centre' and have been incurred by the donor solely within the United Kingdom. The centre is required to keep a record of the actual excess expenses incurred, a record of the amount reimbursed and all receipts produced by the donor linked to the donation.

### **Will I be held responsible if a child born from my donation is disabled in any way?**

It is the responsibility of the donor to inform us of any genetic (inheritable) diseases that are known in the family. It is essential that the Centre is informed of any such conditions as if it can be proven that the donor has knowingly misled the Centre and the recipient then the parents of any child born as a result of treatment that is affected could sue the donor for damages.

## **How many times can a donor donate?**

There is no theoretical limit to the number of times a woman might donate her eggs, however every donor has a limit of 10 family units if each achieve a pregnancy. Once a couple have had a baby with donated eggs they may have as many 'sibling' children using the same donor eggs as they wish, either by using embryos frozen in previous cycles or, fresh donor eggs if the donor is willing to go through another egg collection.

The ten family units limit makes it absolutely essential that you inform the Centre if you have donated eggs in the past at other Centres.

## **Who can donate and how are donors selected?**

Donors must be 35 years or younger and can come from one of two categories:

- 'Anonymous' volunteer donor  
This is perhaps the best way to obtain donor eggs. Donors undergo the procedure voluntarily and for purely altruistic reasons. Expenses incurred by the donor (e.g. transport and loss of earnings) up to the value of £750 are reimbursed.
- Close relative or friend  
Some patients, either for ethnic, cultural or religious reasons and others out of personal preference, choose to have a 'known donor', such as a sister or friend of the female partner.

## **Donor Counselling**

All volunteers for egg donation are carefully counselled by two separate members of the Fertility Centre team and are also seen by the independent counsellor. The effects of the procedure on the donor, her family and children are discussed in detail. The Centre also ensures that if the donor has a partner they participate fully and agree with the treatment.

If the donor has children who are old enough to understand the implications, we encourage her to discuss it with them also.

Confidentiality is maintained at all times, both for the donor and the recipient and the Centre will not inform the donor of the outcome of the donation. Obviously a known donor would be informed by the recipient couple.

## **The risks to the donor**

There are some risks associated with donation but these are minimal and short term. There is a 1-2% risk of excessive ovarian stimulation (where too many eggs are produced) despite careful monitoring of injections. If this occurs the cycle may be abandoned.

There is a minimal risk of pelvic infection following an egg collection (less than 1%).

## **What should I do if I wish to donate?**

You can contact the nursing staff at the Fertility centre (Tel: 01743 261202) to arrange an appointment or for an informal chat 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

If you wish to know more about the drugs involved and the egg collection procedure itself, the Centre would be happy to provide a copy of its Patient Information Booklet which explains this in detail.

## **The Importance of Telling Children About Their Donor-conceived Origins**

Centres are now required by law to give patients undergoing treatment using donor gametes or embryos information about the importance of telling any resulting child at an early age that they are donor-conceived. Centres are also obliged to inform patients about suitable methods for doing so.

## **What happens if I change my mind?**

You can withdraw your consent to the egg donation at any time (until the eggs have been used), without fear of financial penalty or recrimination. Once donated you can vary or withdraw consent up until the eggs/embryos have been used in treatment.

## **Contacting the Centre**

You can contact the centre at any time if you have any worries, concerns or questions about your treatment.

The staff are available on the following number 01743 261202 Monday—Friday from 9am—5pm.

## **Other Sources of Information**

### **References**

**HFEA**

[www.hfea.gov.uk](http://www.hfea.gov.uk)

**Donor Conception Network**

[www.donor-conception-network.org](http://www.donor-conception-network.org)

**National Gamete Donation Trust**

[www.ngdt.co.uk](http://www.ngdt.co.uk)

### **NHS Direct**

A nurse-led advice service run by the NHS for patients with questions about diagnosis and treatment of common conditions.

Telephone: 0845 4647

Website: [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

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### **Equip**

A West Midlands NHS website which signposts patients to quality health information and provides local information about support groups and contacts.

Website: [www.equip.nhs.uk](http://www.equip.nhs.uk)

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### **Patient UK**

Provides leaflets on health and disease translated into 11 other languages as well as links to national support/self help groups and a directory of UK health websites.

Website: [www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

### **Further information is available from;**

#### **Patient Advise and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS will act on your behalf when handling patient and family concerns, they can also help you get support from other local or national agencies. PALS, is a confidential service.

**Royal Shrewsbury Hospital**, Tel: 0800 783 0057 or 01743 261691

**Princess Royal Hospital**, Tel: 01952 282888

### **Disclaimer**

This leaflet is provided for your information only. It must not be used as a substitute for professional medical care by a qualified doctor or other health care professional. Always check with your doctor if you have any concerns about your condition or treatment. This leaflet aims to direct you to quality websites: these are correct and active at the time of production. The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust is not responsible or liable, directly or indirectly, for ANY form of damages whatsoever resulting from the use (or misuse) of information contained in this leaflet or found on web pages linked to by this leaflet. Information about you and your healthcare is held by the NHS. You can find out more about the information we hold and how it is used in the leaflet called: **our Information**.

Website: [www.sath.nhs.uk](http://www.sath.nhs.uk)

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