DONOR INFORMATION
Frequently Asked Questions (Egg Donors)

What do I need to think about before donating?
Egg donors give a wonderful gift to people who long for a child but it can have a wider impact on the people who received your donation, the donor child, and you and your family.

Legally and socially, the people who receive your donation will be the parents of any child that is born. The child inherits your genes, therefore any child of theirs will be genetically related to you. You should consider how you feel about this now and try to imagine how you may feel in the future. All of our donors will have the opportunity to speak to one of our counsellors to discuss any concerns or implications.

What are my rights and legal responsibilities?
Providing donations and treatments are carried out in an HFEA licensed clinic, egg donors have no legal obligation to any child born as a result of their donation – they will not be a legal parent and will not be named on a birth certificate, neither will they have any rights over how a child will be brought up or be asked to financially support a child. The woman who carries the pregnancy and delivers the baby with her partner are the legal parents of any resultant children.

What is the HFEA?
The HFEA (Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority) is the body that regulates fertility treatment in the UK, for which we are fully licensed and accredited to carry out. We keep a register of all licensed fertility treatments, which is designed to protect everyone concerned, including donors, the people having treatment and their donor-conceived children.

What about anonymity?
The law requires donors to register both non-identifying information and identifying information. This information is kept in a confidential registry at the HFEA. Recipients of donor eggs are allowed access to non-identifying information only.

At 16 years old, a donor-conceived person can obtain their donor’s non-identifying information:
- Physical description (height, weight, eye/hair/skin colour)
- Year and country of birth
- Ethnic group (and that of donor’s parents)
- If the donor was adopted* or donor-conceived (if they are aware of this) - Please note that we only accept donors if they are able to provide a detailed medical history of their biological family.
- If the donor had any genetic children when they registered, the number and gender
- Occupation, religion and interests (if supplied)
- Marital status (at the time of donation)
- Details of screening tests and medical history
- Skills
- Reason for donating and a goodwill message
- Pen portrait (donor’s description of themselves) – identifiable information will be removed from this and the good will message.
At 18 years old, a donor-conceived person can obtain their donor’s identifying information:

- Full name (and any previous names)
- Date of birth
- Town or district of birth
- Last known postal address (or address at the time of registration).

Note: The HFEA will attempt to notify a donor before any of their information is released. It is therefore important that the centre holds up to date contact information so that they can be informed of disclosure of identifiable information. Donors are entitled to request information from the HFEA about the number, sex and year of birth of any people born as a result of their donation. This is done via the Application for Information from the HFEA Register.

How many children can be born from my donation?
As set by the HFEA, there is a maximum limit of ten families that can be created from donated eggs from each donor, although the donor can set a limit for fewer in the relevant consent form. This does not limit the number of children within those families due to the possibility of multiple births (eg. twins, triplets) or siblings.

What tests are carried out?
Blood samples are taken to screen for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Human T-lymphotropic Virus (HTLV), Syphilis, and the Cystic Fibrosis gene. A chromosome analysis (karyotype), haemoglobinopathy screening and blood grouping is also carried out. A urine sample is required to test for Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea.

If test results are positive for the following, donors are excluded from the programme:

- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C
- HIV
- HTLV
- Syphilis
- Haemoglobinopathy
- Cystic Fibrosis gene (carrier)
- Chromosome abnormality

If you test positive for Chlamydia or Gonorrhoea, you will be referred for treatment and deferred from donation. You will be retested after treatment and if results are negative, you may be considered to become an egg donor.

Six months after the embryo transfer to the donor recipient, you will need to come back for follow-up rescreening (Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV, HTLV and Syphilis).

If any of the screening tests indicate that you are not a suitable donor you will be given the reason why and will be offered counselling.

Does travelling abroad affect whether or not I can become a donor?
It depends on where and when you travelled. We will ask about any travel within the last 2 years. Geographical risks of transmitting specific diseases (eg. Zika/Ebola virus) change frequently but we check the risk at the time you apply to become a donor and we will be able to advise you if deferring from donation is necessary.
Why do you need to contact my GP?
Our centre is required by the Human Fertility and Embryology Authority (HFEA) to be satisfied that there is no known reason why a donor might not be suitable.

All information relating to egg donation treatment is kept separately from any other hospital records and is kept in the centre at all times to comply with the HFEA code of practice regarding confidentiality.

You will be asked to sign a consent form to enable us to contact your GP to ask to provide relevant factual information regarding you and your proposed egg donation. Donation will not go ahead if consent is not given.

Do I have to sign a consent form?
Under the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, donors must give valid consent to the use and storage of their eggs and of the embryos produced using the eggs. This consent is given by completing and signing a form supplied by the Authority. For consent to be valid, you must have received adequate information about egg donation and offered counselling before you sign the form. You may withdraw or vary your consent up to the time before the transfer of embryos. Should you wish to withdraw consent you will need to inform the centre and complete an HFEA Withdrawal of Consent form.

Do I decide who can receive my eggs?
The choice of recipient will be at the discretion of the medical staff who may be able to match blood group and physical characteristics. However, you can specify extra conditions for storing or using your donated eggs (or embryos created using them), provided the conditions do not discriminate potential recipients by treating them less favourably because of various protected characteristics that are covered by the Equality Act 2010.

How long can embryos be stored?
You can choose the length of time you wish embryos, created using your donor eggs, to be frozen up to 10 years. The longer the donor allows for the embryos to be frozen, the more flexibility the recipient can have for her treatment.

What are the risks and possible side effects?
There can be side effects which last while taking the medication. They are uncommon but may consist of hot flushes, weight gain due to salt and water retention similar to period discomfort, and restlessness at night.

Despite careful monitoring, in some women the response to treatment drugs may be excessive resulting in the development of a large number of eggs which causes the ovaries to swell. In some cases, you may experience pain but this usually subsides with bed rest. The symptoms of severe ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome (OHSS) include nausea, vomiting, pain, abdominal swelling and shortness of breath. In the majority of cases, rest, drinking plenty of fluids and taking simple pain relievers are all that is needed. In severe cases, admission to hospital may be required. Approximately 7% of women receiving superovulatory drugs experience mild symptoms and 1 to 2% of women experience severe hyperstimulation requiring treatment in hospital.
Other potential side effects are allergic reaction to drugs used (rarely encountered), bleeding after the operation, damage to bowel, blood vessel or bladder (rarely seen in our practice) and the small risk of pelvic infection after your operation.

**Will any part of the procedure be painful?**
The operation to remove eggs is carried out under conscious sedation administered by an anaesthetist. It is uncommon to experience pain during the procedure. After the operation, some women may experience mild pain or discomfort, this will be controlled by painkillers. Any pain which is not helped by simple painkillers (ie. paracetamol) should be reported to the centre or your GP.

**Will I have to take a lot of time off work if I decide to donate my eggs?**
The number of hospital visits varies from 8 to 12 visits and this depends on your response to stimulatory drugs. During these visits, we may have to take blood from you to check your hormones, carry out a vaginal scan and teach you how to administer injections. The hospital visits will usually last 30 minutes.

You will need to take some time off work on the day of your egg recovery, for which you will receive 48 hours notice. If you feel well after your operation, you can go back to work the next day.

**Do I need to change my daily routine?**
You do not need to change your daily routine or dietary habits while on the programme. It is advisable to stop drinking alcohol cigarette smoking.

**Can I change my mind?**
You can change your mind at any time without any pressure or obligation. We will make sure you would only go ahead with treatment after discussion and counselling. You have the right to change your mind and decide not to donate your eggs up to the stage before the transfer of embryo[s] into the recipient. You will not incur a financial or other penalty.

**Can donors be sued for any reason?**
A donor-conceived person born with an abnormality could sue their donor for damages if it is proved that the donor had not told the clinic the relevant facts about their families’ medical history when they donated. This is why it is important to tell the clinic where you donate of any inherited disabilities or physical or mental illnesses that affect you or anyone in your family. However, provided donors are open and honest about their medical and family history, this is highly unlikely.

**For further information**
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