



## **PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET**

# **INFORMATION FOR RECIPIENTS CONSIDERING RECEIVING AN EMBRYO DONATION**

This leaflet is for people who are considering using donated embryos to achieve a pregnancy.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **WHO WOULD DONATE EMBRYOS TO US?**

Couples with frozen embryos can donate their remaining embryos to other couples if they have completed their family or concluded their treatment. All donating couples do so voluntarily and because they wish to help others. No financial incentives are involved.

For embryo donation, the egg provider would be aged between 18 and 35 (this is a Human Fertilisation Embryology Authority regulation - HFEA), and the sperm provider between 18 and 45 at the time the embryos were produced. In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a donation outside this age bracket.

Donors will have been assessed as being medically fit, having no risk of passing on disease and having no significant personal or family history of inheritable disorders.

### **WHAT WILL THE EMBRYO DONORS HAVE BEEN SCREENED FOR?**

Before donation, the embryo donors will have certain screening tests which are assessed by our clinicians to reduce the risks of passing on diseases or deformities to any resultant child. These tests will include:

- HIV 1 & 2
- Hepatitis B
- Syphilis
- Hepatitis C
- Human T cell Lymphotropic Viruses (HTLV 1 & 2)
- Chlamydia & Gonorrhoea
- Karyotype (Their genetic make-up)
- Cystic Fibrosis (to see if they are a carrier)

Other tests may have been performed depending on a potential donor's ethnic group.

### **WHAT ARE THE COUNSELLING REQUIREMENTS?**

Implication counselling is mandatory for those who will be receiving donated embryos, and this will take place with one of our fully trained counsellors.

During the counselling session, you will have the opportunity to discuss the implications of receiving donated embryos both for yourselves and the potential donor-conceived child.

## CAN EMBRYO DONORS CHANGE THEIR MINDS?

Yes. Embryo donors can change or withdraw their consent at any time up to the point at which the embryos are used in treatment.

## WHAT CAN RECIPIENTS BE TOLD ABOUT THE EMBRYO DONORS AT THE TIME OF TREATMENT?

You can only receive non-identifying information such as physical characteristics (e.g. height, hair colour, eye colour and blood group) to help you make your decision to proceed with an embryo donor.

The donors may also provide other non-identifying information about themselves, such as hobbies or interests.

## CONSENTS AND LEGAL ISSUES

It is a legal requirement that we obtain written consent from both intended parents before you receive donated embryos for your treatment.

These will include legal parenthood consent forms (which will vary dependent on your marital status) to ensure that you are both legal parents to any child born.

## WELFARE OF THE CHILD ASSESSMENT

The HFEA Act states that a treatment centre **must** take account of the welfare of any child who may be born as a result of the treatment (including the need of that child for supportive parenting), and of any other child (other children in the household or the family) who may be affected by the birth. We will ask you to complete consent forms prior to your treatment which we will examine and, if satisfactory, sign off before treatment proceeds.

## WHAT ARE EMBRYO DONATION AND ANONYMITY LAWS?

If you have a child born due to receiving donated embryos, the child can apply for non-identifying information about the donors (such as physical characteristics) when they reach the age of 16.

When the child reaches the age of 18, they can apply for identifying information about the donors (such as their name, date of birth and last known address).

These details will be held on a register at the HFEA and further information and application forms can be obtained from the website [www.hfea.gov.uk](http://www.hfea.gov.uk)

## LEGAL PARENTHOOD FROM THE HFEA AFTER EMBRYO DONATION

### THE CHILD'S MOTHER

The woman or birthing person who gives birth is always considered to be the child's legal mother. This is the case, even if the treatment involved the use of donated eggs or embryos. The law only recognises one person as the legal mother of a child.

## THE CHILD'S FATHER/SECOND PARENT

Where the individual who gives birth is married or in a civil partnership, their husband/wife will be the legal father/ parent of the child, unless it can be shown that he/she did not consent to their treatment. A female second parent is not the legal mother of the child; the law does not allow a child to have two legal mothers.

When the individual giving birth is not married or in a civil partnership, the legal father or second parent of the child will be the person who is named on the 'consent to parenthood' forms. The couple receiving your donated embryos completes the forms before their treatment. Both the named person and the woman / person giving birth must consent to the second parent being recognised as the child's legal parent.

## TREATMENT OF A SINGLE WOMAN

HFEA state that if you are a single woman using donated embryo(s) you will be the legal mother of any resulting child. However, the law is not as explicit in such cases about who might be the legal father and there is a clear legal risk that the man whose sperm was used in the creation of the embryo may be considered the father.

HFEA, therefore, advises that any woman who is not in a legally recognised relationship intending to use donated embryos should seek legal advice before doing so. They state that you should be satisfied with any potential that the sperm provider could be recognised in law as the father of any child born following embryo donation to a single woman who does not have a husband or civil partner or has not entered into a parenthood agreement with another person.

## FUTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT:

<https://www.hfea.gov.uk/treatments/explore-all-treatments/becoming-the-legal-parents-of-your-child/>

<https://www.hfea.gov.uk/donation/donor-conceived-people-and-their-parents/>

You may also want to contact the Donor Conception Network, a self-help network for families created with the help of donated eggs, sperm or embryos: [www.dcnetwork.org](http://www.dcnetwork.org)

## CONTACT DETAILS



0161 276 6000



<https://mft.nhs.uk/saint-marys/services/gynaecology/reproductive-medicine/>