

SPERM AND EGG SHARING

What is sperm and egg sharing?

If you are self-funding your treatment, sperm and egg sharing may be an option to access fertility treatment at a reduced cost.

All sperm and egg donors are registered with the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA). Details regarding all treatment cycles using donor sperm and eggs, and their outcomes, are stored on the HFEA's confidential register.

In addition, you will be asked for permission to contact your GP. This is because we need to make sure that there is nothing in your medical or family background that would prevent you from becoming a donor.

Who is suitable to be a sharer?

Every IVF unit will have individual criteria to be an egg or sperm sharer. Therefore, not all couples will be suitable for egg or sperm sharing.

Whether you are a sperm or egg sharer you will have an appointment with a doctor to go through your medical and family background. You will need to have certain health tests to ensure you do not pass on any serious inheritable diseases, or medical conditions to the baby or mother. Screening is required before and after donating.

You and your partner (if applicable) will receive implications counselling so that you both have the opportunity to discuss and consider all of the aspects of being a donor for yourself and your family.

It is not possible to donate anonymously so any children conceived with your donation could contact you when they are adults. Obviously for some people, meeting the families they helped to create is a wonderful privilege, whereas others feel less comfortable with that prospect.

You may also need to tell a partner or children of your own about your donation later on. Doing your research now and feeling completely happy with your decision will ensure you're 100% committed to this extraordinary gesture.

Egg sharing

Age 18-35

Satisfactory Ovarian reserve and a healthy gynaecological history are required to be considered for egg donation. On the day that your eggs are collected, half of the eggs will be used for donation. The remaining half will be used for your own treatment.

Sperm sharing

Age 18-46

Semen quality must be within normal WHO (2021) parameters in all values to be considered for sperm donation. You would require multiple visits over several weeks to provide enough sperm for storage. The total time required for sperm donation is around 6 months and this must be completed before you start your own treatment.

Who would be the legal parent of a child born with my sperm or eggs?

Any child born as a result of donor treatment is legally the child of the birth mother and partner (if applicable). The sperm or egg donor is not the child's legal parent and has no legal or financial responsibilities for the child.

What are the risks of sharing?

Donating your eggs is generally very safe; most women won't experience any health problems beyond the discomfort of having the treatment itself.

The only potential risk to be aware of is having a reaction to your fertility drugs. Normally if this happens the effects are mild and include hot flushes, feeling irritable or down, headaches and restlessness.

In some very rare cases women develop ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome (OHSS). OHSS is a very serious and potentially fatal reaction to fertility drugs. Symptoms include a swollen stomach and stomach pains and, in extreme cases, nausea, vomiting, breathlessness, fainting, a swollen stomach and reduced urine.

What happens now?

Please contact the clinic of your choice. For further information about egg and sperm sharing and donation: Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority www.hfea.gov.uk

The National Gamete Donation Trust:

www.ngdt.co.uk

Within this leaflet we use the term woman/women, however we acknowledge that it is not only people who identify as women for whom it is necessary to access our services. We recognise the importance of providing inclusive and respectful care to all people and their families, including those whose gender identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to make you feel more comfortable while you are under our care