

MelbourneIVF
A MEMBER OF VIRTUS HEALTH



Advertising for an

Egg Donor



mivf.com.au ♦ 1800 111 483

Life. Pass It On.

Melbourne IVF is aware that many patients decide to advertise for an egg donor in Victorian publication, Melbourne's Child, and that there is little evidence to indicate how successful this method is. We therefore conducted a research project to investigate the success of this method and results of this study will be presented throughout this brochure (for full reference please see Nowoweiski, S., Matic, H., & Foster, P (2011). Patient experiences in advertising for an egg donor. Reproductive BioMedicine Online, 22, 686-691).

Introduction

Recruiting your own egg donor can seem daunting and difficult, however it is possible.

As the demand for egg donors increases, individuals and couples are achieving success in finding their own donor by placing advertisements in the media i.e. newspapers and parental publications. Advertising this way offers individuals and couples control and choice in the selection of a donor. Melbourne IVF's egg donation program helps women who, for a multitude of reasons, are unable to use their own eggs and require eggs donated from another woman to achieve a pregnancy.

Getting started: Advertising in printed publications

Historically, most patients have advertised in printed publications such as Melbourne's Child (including regional versions and even interstate versions), their local Leader newspaper or other printed journals and publications.

In order to advertise in a printed publication permission must be granted by the Minister of Health before placing an advertisement and newspapers and other publications will require proof of this prior to publication.

This permission can be obtained by sending a copy of your proposed advertisement to:

Minister of Health

Department of Human Services
GPO BOX 4057
Melbourne VIC 3001

The stamped, approved copy will be returned to you usually within approximately 8 weeks. Note: It is illegal to offer any payment to a potential donor except for reimbursement of medical expenses and your advertisement must not mention any financial inducements.

Developing criteria and writing the advertisement

Before writing your advertisement, take some time to consider what criteria and/or qualities you are looking for in a donor. Ideally, donors should have completed their families and be aged between 25 and 40 years of age.

Our recent study found that one of the most helpful strategies is to obtain a recent copy of Melbourne's Child and read through other advertisements to identify common themes.

Most advertisements contain information regarding the advertiser's family status (eg single or married), their attempts to conceive (eg "we have been on IVF for 3 years"), and qualities in a donor they are looking for eg 'a kind and helpful woman'.

Advertisements vary quite considerably regarding the amount of personal, descriptive information and it is up to you to decide how detailed you want your advertisement to be. If you are looking for an egg donor with specific qualities (such as a specific ethnic or cultural background), you may also like to consider including this in your advertisement in order for potential responders to be aware of your criteria.

The following are examples of advertisements (which have been de-identified).

Egg Donor Wanted

Example 1

We are a healthy, loving and financially secure couple. Having been happily married for four years, we are beginning to ache to have a child of our own, to raise our own family. We are both from loving and supportive families and we are confident that we will be able to provide a child with a loving, caring, stable home, a good education and a happy upbringing.

Sadly, we have been unable to conceive even after ten failed IVF attempts.

Our only hope is for a generous donor to help us. If you are a mother, under 35 years of age and willing to help us, please contact us, XXX and XXX, via e-mail (XXXX) or phone (XXXX) All travel and medical expenses will be reimbursed.

This advertisement has been approved by the Victorian Minister for Health, as required by s.40 of the Human Tissue Act 1982 (Vic) (March 2012).

Example 2

We are a couple in our early forties who are desperate to complete our dream of having a family. All our attempts to fall pregnant naturally or through IVF have failed. Our doctor has now advised us that the only way to have our dream fulfilled is by having an egg donor. We are of European background and therefore prefer our egg donor to be of similar origin too. If you are under 36 years, completed your

own family and are interested in helping us, we would love to hear from you. All travel and medical expenses will be reimbursed, Please write to XXX and XXX, email XXXXXXXXXX

This advertisement has been approved by the Victorian Minister for Health, as required by s.40 of the Human Tissue Act 1982 (Vic) (March 2012).

Listing your contact details

It is important to think carefully about your privacy before you publish your contact details. Setting up a PO Box or specific email address or mobile phone number for this purpose only is preferable to using your private contact details. Email appears to be the most common means of communication used in advertising.

Potential responses

The research study undertaken by Melbourne IVF was conducted over an 18 month period (July 2007–Dec 2008) and there were 28 responses. The following information is based on the information provided in these responses:

Success of advertising

- ◆ 56% (15 people) did recruit an egg donor through advertising in Melbourne's Child
 - ◆ 30% (8 people) found an egg donor elsewhere
 - ◆ 15% (4 people) had not found an egg donor
 - ◆ one person did not answer this question
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Responses received

- ◆ 75% (21 people) received at least one genuine response to their advertisement
 - ◆ Most people received a response within 2 weeks (50%) or 1–2 months (33%) after the advertisement was published
 - ◆ 50% of people also received at least one ingenuine response (such as spam emails, or illegal requests for payment for donation etc.)
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You may need to publish your advertisement more than once before you receive an appropriate response and this can be both financially and emotionally draining. It may help to think about your financial and emotional limitations before placing your advertisement.

Choosing and meeting your potential donor

Depending on the number of responses to your advertisement, you may need time to evaluate each potential donor according to your personal criteria. It is important to acknowledge receipt of a potential donor's response, thank them for taking an interest in your situation, and advise them of whether you are considering their application. You may like to exchange further information with each potential donor to assist you and your potential donors with decision making. Melbourne IVF can also send potential donors an information booklet. This can be arranged by contacting the donor team on (03) 9473 4478.

Once you have chosen your donor and they have agreed to proceed, ensure that you inform all other potential donors. It is a good idea when declining donors, to find out if they may still be interested in donating in the future should your chosen donor be unable/ unwilling to proceed.

If the potential donor you have chosen agrees to proceed with the next steps, it is recommended that you initially meet in a neutral location such as a café to get to know each other further. Always be mindful of your donor's privacy when contacting them or leaving messages. Take your time to get to know your donor and resist any pressure to start making plans until you feel confident to do so. If you have a partner, ensure they are involved in this process. You are likely to feel nervous before meeting your potential donor. Likewise your potential donor may also be experiencing anxiety about the meeting.

Most potential donors are interested in hearing a little about you and your journey to have a child. There are also important issues for you and the potential donor to discuss including expectations regarding future contact between you and your donor and the role of the donor in the child's life.

Our research shows that information considered important by those who did select a donor, included the donor's motivation to donate, the donor's age, and whether they had completed their family.

Our Counsellors will also assist you with exploring this information.

Alternative methods of recruitment

It should also be noted that advertising in a printed publication is not the only method to recruit an egg donor. Many patients are now using the Internet to connect with potential donors through the use of online chat rooms and forums. Some websites have been developed specifically for this purpose, such as *aussieeggdonors.com*

There are also often specific forums dedicated to egg donor issues on common pregnancy websites such as:

bellybelly.com.au

bubhub.com.au

essentialbaby.com.au

Melbourne IVF has no affiliation with these websites and cannot attest to their suitability. As with any forum you choose to find an egg donor, we strongly encourage you to take your time to get to know any potential donors before making a decision.

Your own network of family or friends may be another source for a possible egg donor. Although you may not know of anyone directly who may be a suitable donor, if you are comfortable in sharing information about your need for a donor within your network, you may open up potential possibilities for offers.

Finally, Melbourne IVF offers a clinic recruited egg donation program. This program recruits local donors between the ages of 25-34 with around 5- 10 donors available per year.

Whether you are beginning to consider advertising for an egg donor as an option, or whether you have met a potential donor and are considering proceeding with them, the Melbourne IVF donor team is available to assist you through this process. If you wish to discuss any questions or concerns or obtain any support, please contact Melbourne IVF on (03) 9473 4444 to make an appointment or to speak with a counsellor.

Melbourne IVF

New Public Enquiries	1800 111 IVF (483)
Melbourne IVF Reception	(03) 9473 4444
Donor Egg Team	(03) 9473 4478
Email	donoreggnurses@mivf.com.au



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