

Becoming a

# *Sperm donor*

a guide to the treatment process



The Melbourne IVF donor sperm program will be your main point of contact. We encourage you to contact the team with any enquiries on (03) 9473 4428 or [donorsperm@mivf.com.au](mailto:donorsperm@mivf.com.au)

## What is sperm donation?

Sperm donation refers to the use of sperm, donated by a third person who is referred to as the 'donor', to assist an individual or couple, known as the 'recipient(s)', in their attempt to become parents. Donors are known as either 'recipient recruited' or 'clinic recruited' donors depending on the relationship between the donor and recipient.

### Recipient recruited donors

Recipient recruited donors donate their sperm to specified named recipient(s), usually a relative or friend.

### Clinic recruited donors

Clinic recruited donors donate their sperm to the IVF clinic for allocation to unknown recipients.

### Who can use donated sperm?

Using donated sperm is an option for many patients who are unable to conceive for a variety of reasons. Donor insemination or the use of donor sperm for IVF is a possible option when a male has a diagnosis of infertility, carries a serious genetic disease, or has an infectious disease. The Melbourne IVF donor sperm program is also an option for same sex couples and single women.

### Who can be a sperm donor?

Donors should be healthy men aged between 25 and 45 years. Recipient recruited donors may be over 45 years of age.

Donors who wish to donate to the clinic must be an Australian resident or citizen, and must not have children under the age of 12 months.

Medical and andrology appointments will be scheduled for the donor during which medical history will be reviewed and semen analysis conducted. The donor is required to complete a Genetic and Medical Health Questionnaire.

In some instances, for potential recipient recruited sperm donors, a clinical psychiatrist review and presentation of the case to the Clinical Review Committee for approval is required.

These include cases where the potential recipient recruited donor:

- ◆ is under 25 years of age
- ◆ has offspring under 12 months of age or whose partner is pregnant, and
- ◆ intergenerational donation is proposed e.g. son to father

The donor process may only commence once these requirements are satisfied and approval granted by the Clinical Review Committee.

### **Can I be paid to be a sperm donor?**

No, donating sperm is a purely altruistic gift. In Australia it is illegal to receive or make any type of payment for human tissue, including donated sperm. Under the Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2008 (Victorian legislation), donors may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred during the donation process with proof of receipt, such as travel and parking, however they cannot be compensated for loss of work time.

### **Quarantine period**

Melbourne IVF requires all donated sperm to be quarantined for a minimum of three months. All donors will need to complete an infectious diseases screening blood test prior to their first donation and will need to repeat this test after the end of the quarantine period.

## Sperm donation — what is involved?

Becoming a sperm donor involves attending a series of pre-donation appointments. One of the first steps is to attend a minimum of two counselling appointments.

### Counselling appointments

In Victoria it is a legislative requirement that recipients (and their partners if applicable) and donors meet with a counsellor to discuss the implications of sperm donation. It is a Melbourne IVF requirement based on NHMRC ethical guidelines that donors' partners (if applicable) also attend the counselling sessions. This is an opportunity to consider the issues and implications associated with their decision to be involved in the donor program and to make an informed decision.

At least two counselling sessions are scheduled for donors and their partners (if applicable). For all recipient recruited sperm donors a combined counselling session with their recipient is also required. Consent forms are signed with the counsellor.

Donors may contact or schedule further appointments with the counsellors to discuss questions or concerns at any stage. Counselling appointments are available at East Melbourne, The Women's Hospital or at the Melbourne IVF network clinics.

It is important to consider the following issues which will be explored in the counselling sessions:

## Becoming a clinic recruited sperm donor

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- ◆ Why you wish to become a sperm donor
  - ◆ How many families you wish to be created as a result of your donation (there is currently a legislated maximum of ten women who may have children conceived from one donor's sperm. This includes the donor's current or previous relationships, though there may be more than one child per family)
  - ◆ Whether you wish to know if a child is conceived as a result of your donation. Information is available from Melbourne IVF. Donors will also be notified by the Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority (VARTA) that a birth resulting from their donation has been recorded on the Central Register. This register is maintained by VARTA and records all births resulting from donor treatment in Victoria. All donors and recipients are also recorded on this register.
  - ◆ How will you feel about a child conceived from your donation?
  - ◆ How will you feel if the donor conceived child wishes to contact you at 18 years of age or the child and their parent/s seek earlier contact?
  - ◆ What should your children know about you being a donor? (if applicable).
  - ◆ What should your family and friends be told?
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## Becoming a recipient recruited sperm donor

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- ◆ How your donation, whether successful or not, is likely to impact on your relationship with the recipient(s) and/ or your own relationships now and in the future.
  - ◆ Who else should you tell?
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Following the counselling appointments, if you meet the donor eligibility criteria and wish to proceed with the donation, further appointments will be required. These include pathology collection, andrology and medical appointments.

### **Pathology collection**

The Melbourne IVF phlebotomist will take screening blood tests for HIV, Hepatitis B & C, Syphilis, Cytomegalovirus, Human T-Lymphotropic Virus (HTLV) 1 & 2, Cystic Fibrosis, Spinal Muscular Atrophy, Thalassaemia, Full Blood Examination, Blood Type and Karyotype. Further genetic screening may be ordered as appropriate.

**The hours for this service are as follows:**

Monday–Friday: 7.00am–3.30pm and Saturday: 7.30am–12 midday

### **Semen analysis appointment**

All clinic and recipient recruited sperm donors are required to undergo a semen analysis to assess the quality of sperm, prior to proceeding with donation. This will be a scheduled appointment with the andrology department where you will be required to provide a sample for analysis.

### **Medical appointment**

The medical appointment is scheduled to follow the counselling, phlebotomist and semen analysis appointments.

All sperm donors are required to attend a medical appointment with the Sperm Donor Program Fertility Specialist. This will involve a review of the donor's medical history, and medical assessment of suitability to become a sperm donor. The Fertility Specialist will also discuss the results of the screening blood tests and semen analysis. All donors are required to complete a Genetic and Medical Health Questionnaire. Any issues that arise from the completion of these forms will be discussed during this medical appointment and if necessary referred to a Genetic Counsellor for review.

### **Donation appointments**

Once the sperm has been accepted for donation, the donor is required to schedule a series of appointments with the andrology department to provide sperm donation samples. This will involve approximately 2-4 donation appointments for recipient recruited sperm donors and approximately 5-12 donation appointments for clinic recruited sperm donors.

The donated sperm is then quarantined for a minimum of three months from the date of the last donation.

### **Clearance for use**

At the end of the quarantine period, sperm donors are contacted to return for final screening blood tests to allow clearance of the sperm for use.

## Clinic recruited donor sperm allocation

Potential recipients will view your non-identifying donor profile and your Genetic and Medical Health Questionnaire. This assists a recipient to select an appropriate donor for them.

## Preparing for treatment

Recipient recruited donor	Clinic recruited donor
Contact Donor Program Nurse who explains process and forwards information to potential donor. Donor nurse organises subsequent counselling, nursing, andrology and medical appointments for donor.	Contact Donor Program Nurse who explains process and forwards information to potential donor. If donor is interested in proceeding, the first step is to attend a counselling appointment, which both the donor and partner (if applicable) must attend.
Counselling Appointment 1	Discuss implications of being a sperm donor. Complete paperwork.
Counselling Appointment 2	With same counsellor as in Appointment 1. Donor and partner (if applicable) attend to review issues and sign consents. All known arrangements require a joint counselling session prior to signing consents.
Plebotomist Appointment	Pre quarantine screening blood tests undertaken.
Andrology Appointment	Semen analysis undertaken.
Medical Appointment Sperm Donor Program Doctor	Organised 2-4 weeks after screening tests and semen analysis. Medical history is obtained, test results reviewed, donor's medical eligibility assessed. In some instances a genetic review will be organised.
Andrology Appointments	<b>Recipient</b> recruited donors: Andrology organises 2-4 appointments to make donations. <b>Clinic</b> recruited donors: Andrology organises 5-12 appointments to make donations. Quarantine of samples commences from the day the
Post Quarantine Period Blood test	Donor program nurse organises blood test appointment at the end of the quarantine period. All test results and documents are then reviewed by the Sperm Donor
<b>Profile offered to potential recipients</b>	



## Legislative requirements: Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 2008

The Melbourne IVF Donor Program is guided by the legislative requirements under the Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 2008. Under this legislation the following important information applies:

1. A donor's consent lapses after 10 years, unless a lesser period is specified by the donor.
2. The legislation provides that treatment using a sperm donor may not result in more than 10 women having children who are genetic siblings, including any current or former partner of the donor. This does not prevent women using gametes/embryos produced by the donor to produce a child that will be a genetic sibling to the woman's existing children.
3. The person who produced the gametes (eggs & sperm) from which the embryo has been formed must consent to embryo storage period beyond 5 years and also must consent to the removal of the embryo(s) from storage.
4. The import or export of donor gametes or embryos formed from donor gametes in or out of Victoria must have written approval from the Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority (VARTA). Melbourne IVF will only approve the export of clinic recruited donor sperm in exceptional circumstances if there is sufficient sperm available. Melbourne IVF is required to give the donor written notice of the name of the clinic to which their sperm or embryo(s) created from their sperm has been exported.
5. It is an offence under the ART Act 2008 to knowingly or recklessly give false or misleading information or omit to give material information.
6. Posthumous use of donor gametes and embryos created with donor gametes is not permitted.

### Status of children

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- ◆ Where donor sperm was used by a married woman or a woman in a bona fide domestic relationship with a male, the woman and her husband/partner shall be presumed for all purposes to be the mother and father of any child born as a result of the pregnancy.
  - ◆ Where donor sperm was used by a woman with a female partner or a woman with no partner, the donor who produced the sperm is presumed not to be the father of any child born as a result the pregnancy.
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## Birth registration

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- ◆ Melbourne IVF must provide Information regarding births of donor conceived offspring to the Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority (VARTA), who will maintain the Central and Voluntary donor registers.

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- ◆ If the birth registration statement indicates that the child was conceived by a donor treatment, the Registrar must mark the words "donor conceived" against the entry of the child's birth in the register.

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- ◆ If the donor conceived offspring applies for a birth certificate after 18 years of age the Registrar must attach an addendum to the certificate stating further information is available about this entry.

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- ◆ The Registrar is only able to issue the addendum to the donor conceived person named in the entry on the register.

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The Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority (VARTA) will contact donors in writing to verify the information Melbourne IVF provides them when a donor's details are first entered onto the central register (i.e. when the first donor conceived child is born). It is the donor's responsibility to notify VARTA and Melbourne IVF of any change to their contact details.

**Melbourne IVF encourages all individuals/couples to seek independent legal advice before donating gametes/embryos or using a gamete or embryo donor.**

## Contacts and resources

Resource	Telephone	Details
Melbourne IVF	03 9473 4444	mivf.com.au
Donor Program Nurse	03 9473 4428	donorsperm@mivf.com.au
Counsellors	03 9473 4444	
Nurses	03 9473 4444	
Patient Liaison Team Administration	03 9473 4444	
VARTA – Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority	03 8601 5250	varta.org.au
BDM Births, Deaths and Marriages	1300 369 367	bdm.vic.gov.au
Melbourne IVF Pathology	03 9473 4444	Level 1, 344 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne
Melbourne IVF Andrology	03 9473 4725	Level 2, 344 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne

## Books

Daniels K. *Building a Family with the Assistance of Donor Insemination*, Palmerston North: Dunmore Press; 2004

Ehrensaft D. *Mommies, Daddies, Donors, Surrogates; Answering Tough Questions and Building Strong Families*, New York (NY): Guilford Press; 2005

Rawlings D, Looi K. *Swimming Upstream: The Struggle to Conceive*, South Australia: Landmark Media; 2006



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