

# **Known Donor Oocyte (Egg) Donation Information for Donors and Recipients**

## **Background**

This document provides information on the oocyte (egg) donation program offered at Westmead Fertility Centre and answers some of the questions commonly raised.

Westmead Fertility Centre only offers 'known' donation whereby the donor and recipient are known to one another. Westmead Fertility Centre does not locate a donor for a recipient or vice versa.

To comply with legislation and governing bodies and ensure the safety and well being of all individuals involved, Westmead Fertility Centre has a detailed and systematic egg donation program (outlined in the flowchart below). Egg donation is a complex process with various social, emotional and medical implications. At Westmead Fertility Centre, support is available along the donation journey. Your questions are welcomed at any time and we will endeavour to explain each step of the process.

It is important that all parties involved (including the donor's partner, if applicable) are equally agreeable to participation in the donor program. Counselling sessions and Fertility Specialist consultations will promote openness and honesty and explore the implications for those directly involved in the donation as well as for the family unit and child(ren) born.

It is important to consider when embarking on the donor program that the process takes time and there are no guarantees of donation completion or success. Both the donor and recipient will need to attend Westmead Fertility Centre for various appointments and commitments. If the donor is approved and her eggs are collected, there is no guarantee that the eggs will fertilise, survive the freezing and thawing process or result in a pregnancy; even if the donor has had previous pregnancies and children. It is essential to remember that the donor and recipients are individuals; therefore, treatment will vary from person to person.

## **Westmead Fertility Centre Egg Donation Process Outline**

### **DONOR COORDINATOR**

Once the recipient/s have found an egg donor, they and the donor will have a phone appointment with WFC's Donor Coordinator to discuss the overall process. The donor will have infectious screening in preparation for the Fertility Specialist consult.



### **DONOR's FERTILITY SPECIALIST CONSULT**

The Fertility Specialist will assess medical suitability. Health questionnaire, donor info, medical history will be completed and fertility and infectious screening blood test results reviewed and explained and ordered.



### **INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING SESSIONS**

Both the donor and recipient/s will have an individual counselling session to discuss the implications of egg donation. Partners, if applicable, must be present for these sessions.



### **GENETIC COUNSELLING/TESTING**

The donor will have an appointment with WFC's affiliated genetic counsellor to discuss family history and to undergo genetic testing. The process of genetic testing and the implications of a positive result for the donor and their family (if applicable) will be discussed. The donor is encouraged to gather information about their family history prior to this appointment. If the donor is a carrier for a genetic condition, the male recipient may also need to be screened.



### **JOINT COUNSELLING SESSION**

Both the donor and recipient/s will have a joint counselling session prior to any consents being signed. Partners, if applicable, must be present for this session. All parties are encouraged to be open and honest and discuss and confirm their willingness and desire to partake in the donation.



### **FINAL FERTILITY SPECIALIST CONSULT & NURSE INTERVIEW**

Both the donor and recipient/s will have a final medical consultation to discuss all results, sign consents and finalise preparation for treatment. A nurse interview will follow to discuss the egg collection process.



### **TREATMENT**

Once all participants have confirmed their willingness to continue, all consents are finalized and the recipient/s have paid for the donor's egg collection cycle treatment fee - the donor may commence their egg collection cycle. The donor must provide a urine sample on the day of egg collection for further infectious disease screening. Successfully fertilized eggs will then be frozen. Three months following egg collection, the donor will have a final blood test to complete the quarantine period. The recipient will have a blood test for the same panel as the donor prior to receiving the embryos in a frozen embryo transfer cycle.

### **Matters to be considered before donating or receiving eggs:**

Before committing yourself to treatment, here are some questions for you to consider.

- What is the current status of the law regarding the donation of eggs?
- Who are the legal parents of the child?
- Are records kept of the donor and recipient?
- How do you feel knowing that the child would be able to have access to identifying information about the donor at the age of eighteen?
- Is fertilisation and pregnancy guaranteed?
- How many times can a donor donate?
- Can you donate eggs directly to your friend or relative?
- Will you tell the child born about their biological origin? Will you tell others?
- Am I willing to undergo extensive testing that may reveal something about myself I did not know?

### **NSW Ministry of Health Central ART Register:**

Since the introduction of the NSW Central Register in 2010, the birth of any child conceived using donor eggs must be recorded on the Central Register in addition to certain identifying information about the donor and recipient. A donor-conceived child can access their donor's identifying information from the registry once they turn 18 years of age.

Details lodged with the Central ART Register include:

- The full name, gender and date of birth of each child born as a result of the donation at Westmead Fertility Centre.
- The full name of the woman who gave birth to the child.
- Information about the donor, including:
  - Full name;
  - Residential address;
  - Date and place of birth;
  - Ethnicity and physical characteristics;
  - Medical histories and any genetic test results that are relevant to the future health of the recipient and any child (and any descendants of the child);
  - Sex and year of birth of other child(ren) arising from the donation;

- Name of each ART provider who has previously obtained donated eggs from the donor and the date on which the eggs were obtained.

All egg donors are asked to consent to this identifying information being placed on the Central Register. If they do not consent, donation cannot proceed.

Recipients and donors are able to access non-identifying information about the donor and any children (respectively) however open exchange of information between all parties is encouraged and this will be discussed further in counselling sessions.

### **Further Regulatory Framework:**

- Legislation in NSW declares that any child conceived by donated eggs is the legal child of the couple who have both consented to the procedure of receiving donated eggs. Therefore, the partner of the egg recipient has all the rights and duties of responsibility as if the child was their natural child. The donor has no legal or financial obligations to any child(ren) born as result of the donation.
- All parties are free to modify or revoke their consent at any time up until the embryo has been created using the donated egg.
- Egg donation must be altruistic – this means that it is against the law for a recipient to give (or the egg donor to receive) any direct or indirect inducements for the donation. The reimbursement of reasonable associated out-of-pocket expenses is allowed. The counsellor will document the reason for donation to determine that the donor has not been coerced into donating her eggs.
- Westmead Fertility Centre cannot provide treatment if it is likely to result in children of the donor being born to more than five women (whether or not as a result of ART treatment).
- The donor must not be a close genetic family member of the recipient. For example, where the recipient's partner will provide the sperm to fertilise the donated eggs, the donor must not be a close genetic relative (eg sister, daughter) of the recipient's partner.
- Any embryos created using the donated eggs cannot be used more than 15 years from the time the eggs were obtained. Before donation, donors are asked to stipulate whether they consent to the use of embryos resulting from their donation being used

in the event of their death. Even where this consent has been obtained, if the embryos have been stored longer than five years, before they can be thawed it is necessary to ascertain if the donor is no longer alive, and inform the recipient of this. If the donor is deceased and has not consented to the use of the embryos in the event of her death the embryo storage must be terminated.

- Both the egg donor and recipients must have at least one individual counselling session and one joint counseling session prior to the donation consents being signed. Partners, if applicable, must be present for these counselling sessions.
- The recipient must alert Westmead Fertility Centre of the cycle outcome following treatment.

*If you have further questions or concerns regarding the law surrounding egg donation, please seek independent legal advice.*

#### **Westmead Fertility Centre policies:**

- AGE – to maximise the recipient's chances of success whilst reducing the possibility of regret of the donor, an egg donor at Westmead Fertility Centre must be between **25-38 years of age**. A recipient may receive the embryo created from the donated egg up until 50 years of age.
  - It is recommended that the egg donor has completed their own family prior to donating due to the risk of reproductive tract damage and the increased possibility of regret. However, this is not prohibited providing the donor has had the opportunity to consider the issues fully and make an informed choice.
  - Where the donor is over 35 years of age, there is a decreased chance of pregnancy for the recipient and an increased risk of miscarriage and fetal abnormalities in a conceived child.
- An egg donor will need to undergo fertility investigation (including certain blood tests and ultrasounds) with a WFC Fertility Specialist to determine their suitability as a donor.
- To reduce the risk of any person/s born as a result of the donation being affected with a genetic condition (such as cystic fibrosis), the egg donor will need to undergo genetic screening. If the donor is a carrier for a genetic condition, the recipient may also need to be screened. Genetic counselling is included in the program to ensure an understanding of the reasons why genetic screening is conducted and the implications of inheritable conditions for the individual and their family. Genetic screening tests are an additional

cost to the donor work-up fee and may vary depending on the level of screening required.

- To protect all parties involved, donors will be required to undergo comprehensive infectious disease screening, complete a lifestyle questionnaire and declaration and discuss relevant medical history with their Fertility Specialist. Outcomes of these investigations could result in the donor not being approved for donation. The donor will need to consent to any relevant medical or personal information to be discussed with the recipient if necessary.
  - If an egg donor or their current partner has travelled overseas recently, donation may have to be postponed due to Zika virus risk.
  - The donor is asked not to partake in high-risk behaviours during the donation process such as being tattooed, receiving acupuncture, using needles etc. This will be discussed further in the Fertility Specialist consult.
- To minimise the risk of disease transmission and provide greater assurance for the recipient, the embryos created using the donated eggs will be frozen for three months following egg collection. The donor will be re-screened for infectious diseases prior to the recipient receiving the embryo in a frozen embryo transfer cycle.
- To maximise the recipient's chance of success and ensure compliance to legislation, WFC only allows donation of eggs collected at Westmead Fertility Centre from a donor that has not donated at another clinic. The subsequent embryos created may only be used by the recipient couple (they cannot be donated to another couple or individual).
- The standard initial embryo storage duration at Westmead Fertility Centre is five years. Storage beyond five years requires re-consent from the recipients and is conditional on the recipient's age. Continued storage of embryos is not available at Westmead Fertility Centre for women over 50 years of age.
- Westmead Fertility Centre may have to contact the donor, possibly many years after their egg donation cycle – so it is important that the donor informs Westmead Fertility Centre of any change in their contact details on a regular basis. Both the donor and recipient should also keep Westmead Fertility Centre informed of any changes to the donor's health or the health of the child(ren) born (as a result of the donation) which may affect the involved parties.

## **What are the costs of the program?**

Once the egg donor has been initially approved by the Fertility Specialist, the recipient will be required to pay the initial donor 'work-up' fee. Please note, this fee is not covered by Medicare. This work-up fee includes:

- All counselling sessions for both the donor and recipient, including the initial genetic counselling;
- The support of a Donor Coordinator and team at Westmead Fertility Centre throughout the donation process.

Please note, the work-up fee is non-refundable if the donor is not deemed suitable to donate, withdraws their consent or does not have any eggs collected/fertilised or embryos do not survive freezing or thawing. Fertility Specialist consultations and some tests (such as genetic screening) are not included in this work-up fee. Once the donor is approved as suitable, the recipient will also be required to pay for the donor's egg collection cycle and the recipient's own frozen embryo transfer cycle. The donor's egg collection cycle and the recipient's frozen embryo transfer may be subsidised by Medicare, if the Fertility Specialist determines the recipient has a medical cause for infertility.

Westmead Fertility Centre offers treatment cycles using donor eggs at an affordable price. Once the work-up is complete, there are no additional fees on top of the cycle fees for the use of donor gametes. Please refer to Westmead Fertility Centre's website for up to date egg donor 'work-up' fee and treatment cycle prices. The Fertility Specialist's rooms can be contacted directly to determine the price for their consultations.

## **Support and counselling**

The team at Westmead Fertility Centre is available to answer any questions and discuss any matters which may arise before, during and after treatment. A qualified counsellor is also available on request for support in addition to the counselling included in the donation program. There is no extra charge for this counselling service.

You may want to consider joining an external support group. Such as,

- The Australian infertility support group, ACCESS. 1800 888 896 [www.access.org.au](http://www.access.org.au)
- Australian Donor Conception Network  
<https://www.australiandonorconceptionnetwork.org/>