



A guide to Donor Egg In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) Treatment



Introducing Fertility Plus

Fertility Plus is a leading fertility clinic based in Harley Street, dedicated to offering couples and individuals the best chance of conception in a supportive, caring and confidential environment. We believe your care is paramount and we ensure that each of our patients receive personalised care, meaning the same doctor every visit, with fixed pricing and no hidden costs.

What is Donor Egg IVF Treatment?

Donor egg IVF treatment is a process by which an egg, donated by a known or anonymous female donor is fertilised by injecting sperm, outside the body. Once fertilised, the embryos are monitored and transferred back into the uterus of the recipient at the correct time.



Why do I need to use donor eggs?

There are a number of reasons why a woman or couple consider IVF using donor eggs:

1. They have undergone several unsuccessful IVF/ICSI treatment cycles with no live birth, and this has been mainly due to underlying egg quality issue.
2. The female age is over 42 years and therefore egg quality is low.
3. Premature ovarian failure or early menopause.
4. Significant genetic issues in the female that can be passed on to the baby.

Success rates

Donor egg IVF has good success rates, the live birth rates of donor egg IVF treatment are approximately 50%, this varies based on personal medical history and selection of the appropriate donor.

Donor egg IVF treatment steps

Donor egg IVF has a number of steps involved as follows:

1. Counselling for all parties involved.
2. Assessment to check suitability as a recipient, uterine preparation using hormones.
3. Selecting a donor and egg retrieval from the donor.
4. Egg fertilisation, embryo transfer and pregnancy test.

How to choose an egg donor

You have a choice to select donors from a known source to you (a friend or relative) or from a clinic providing services such as donor egg bank. At Fertility Plus we have partnerships with carefully selected donor egg banks in the UK and abroad in Cyprus, Spain and USA.

One important consideration in donor selection is that the UK has stringent regulation set out by the HFEA (UK regulating authority) where a donor should not be over the age of 35 years of age and though remains anonymous to the commissioning couple/person they can be contacted by the child born out of treatment, hence there is a lack of anonymity.

UK donors can have limited financial reimbursements from the clinics and have no rights on the children thus the commissioning couple will be the named official parents on the birth certificate.

Legalities of donor egg treatments

Due the lack of anonymity and scarcity of available donors in the UK, some couples choose to travel abroad for the fertility process. Most clinics outside UK will provide strict anonymity of donors where a child cannot get in contact with the donor in future and that clinics are able to provide higher reimbursements as per local regulations.

Fertility Plus does not have any access to donor recruitment in the UK or abroad and our patients are connected to the egg donor clinics directly. Egg donor recipients should discuss with the egg donation clinic about their choice of donors. The HFEA does not regulate non-UK clinics and if treatment is planned in non-UK clinics, recipients should clarify any doubts from the providing clinic directly.

Screening process for an egg donor

Within the UK, EU and USA the screening processes for donors are quite robust and their genetic, infection, general physical and mental health checks (including counselling) are carried out quite vigorously to establish their eligibility along with their fertility potential. Often the countries outside the UK use 30 years as the upper age limit for the donors and 23 years as the lower age limit.

Screening process for the recipient

It's essential that any recipient goes through a full screening process prior to treatment, this includes a thorough history taking, infection screening, counselling and uterine cavity check. Upper age limit for treatment of recipients is 50 years, which is generally accepted by most countries.

Often recipients are above the age of 40 years and we recommend a thorough pre-conception counselling appointment with an obstetrician to highlight the potential age related issues that may arise during pregnancy and how these pregnancies should be monitored. Special tests such as chest x-ray, heart checks, mammogram and any further relevant tests may be indicated if recipients are over the age of 45 years.

Male partners of recipients will also require assessments such as sperm analysis and infection screening tests.

Counselling

It is vital for all parties to go through an independent psychological counselling process and this is offered to all parties involved for free up to two sessions by Fertility Plus. Further sessions can be arranged at a further cost as and when required.

Timeline of treatment

Once donor selection has taken place, the treatment can be accomplished within 6-8 weeks.

Treatment process for the egg donor

The donor must undergo a treatment process to ensure the eggs are retrieved, please refer to our Guide to IVF Treatment for understanding the process that a potential donor may undergo.

Treatment process for the recipient

Depending on whether the fresh or frozen eggs are used for the treatment, the process may vary in length. The essential process involves hormonal injection oral contraceptive pill to shut down pituitary gland, followed by estrogen tablets to prepare the womb lining and thereafter add progesterone hormone to support the lining of womb to make it more receptive to embryos at the embryo transfer process. Our leaflet, A Guide to IVF, details the process of embryo transfer in detail.

Fresh vs frozen donor eggs for treatment

Fresh eggs have traditionally been considered superior at achieving live births but the recent development of freezing techniques means that there are no statistically different success rates for conception and live birth with frozen eggs. As frozen eggs are already available, it often means that the process can be quicker.

Some important considerations

Donor egg IVF is a complex fertility treatment and whilst we have successfully completed this for patients for over 15 years, there are some unlikely but important scenarios to consider:

- The donor may not produce enough eggs or poor quality eggs, although this is highly unlikely to happen. In this case, a different donor may have to be recommended at additional costs.
- There may be failure to fertilise the donor eggs leading to no available embryos for transfer. In this case the process may have to be restarted with a new donor at additional costs.
- The male partner may fail to produce sperm on the day of donor's egg collection and in this case donor eggs may need to be frozen for future use. There can be additional costs incurred with freezing eggs.

- If using frozen eggs from the donor, the eggs may not survive the thaw process and in this case a new donor may be required at additional costs.
- There is no guarantee that implanted embryos will lead to a pregnancy or live birth. Further treatment cycles using fresh embryos or frozen embryos may be required and these will be at additional costs.
- Egg donation pregnancies are a higher obstetric risk due to the impact of advancing age and impact of ovarian failure on the uterus (womb).
- Any surplus embryos created as a result of initial fertilisation may be frozen for future treatment at additional costs. There is no guarantee that there WILL be surplus embryos suitable for freezing. If these embryos need to be used for treatments, there will be additional costs involved with such treatments.

Multiple pregnancies

The overall aim of donor egg IVF is to achieve a single live birth of a healthy child, therefore our standard advice is to transfer single top quality blastocyst at embryo transfer stage to minimise the chance of multiple pregnancies but this will depend on the quality and number of available embryos. It is important to know that neither Fertility Plus nor our partner clinics will transfer more than TWO embryos under any circumstances.

Ectopic pregnancy and miscarriage

It is practically impossible to avoid an ectopic pregnancy (risk of up to 5%) or a miscarriage (risk of up to 10%) in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. Early pregnancy scan between 6-8 weeks is thus carried out as a part of all donor egg IVF treatments with Fertility Plus to establish viability of pregnancy before being discharged for antenatal care.



To book a consultation with Mr Amit Shah or Mr Anil Gudi to discuss your personal requirements, please contact:

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For further information please visit:

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