

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Donor Sperm Insemination Programs and Sperm Banks (#8)

By Diane N. Clapp, BSN, RN
Medical Information Director, National RESOLVE

If you are considering donor sperm insemination as a way to build your family, you may find it helpful to consider the following questions:

- § Does the clinic have its own sperm bank? If not, which sperm banks does the practice or clinic use?
- § If the patient must contact and make arrangements with the sperm bank directly:
 - Does the clinic provide a list of acceptable Banks?
 - Do the banks follow the donor sperm guidelines of the *American Society for Reproductive Medicine*?
 - How many units of sperm does the clinic suggest you order from the sperm bank?
 - Does the practice or clinic have a storage tank available for frozen sperm and will the clinic maintain your donor sperm samples in cryostorage until needed?
 - Is there a storage fee charged by the clinic for maintaining the patient=s sperm sample during treatment?
 - How long will the clinic hold your donor sperm between treatment cycles?
- § If the clinic provides the donor sperm:
 - Does the clinic use samples from a commercial sperm bank or does it have its own donors?
 - Does the clinic use fresh or frozen sperm samples?
 - Does the clinic follow the donor sperm guidelines of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine?
 - Which sperm banks do the practice or clinic use?
 - Does the clinic have a storage tank available for frozen sperm?
 - Will the clinic reserve and store additional samples of the patient=s specific donor for future cycles?

Questions To Ask Sperm Banks:

Regardless of whether the donor sperm comes from a commercial sperm bank or from the clinic=s own donors, the infertility specialists and clinics should be following the recommendations of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine and use only frozen sperm. Consider asking the sperm bank the following questions:

- § History of family illnesses
- ! What is the minimum age of the donors?
- ! What is the maximum age of the donors?
- ! Does the information about each anonymous donor include information on:
 - Religious background
 - Ethnic/cultural background
 - Race
 - Educational background
 - Physical characteristics
 - Career/professional role

- ! How much non-identifying information about the donor does the sperm bank provide to the consumer?
- ! Does the sperm bank keep a medical history of the donor?
- ! How long are medical records kept for each donor?
- ! Are donors screened for these medical conditions and what is the sperm bank's policy if the donor is found positive for any of these:
 - Sickle Cell Anemia
 - Hepatitis B and C
 - HIV I and II
 - Herpes
 - Cytomegalovirus (CMV)
 - Cystic Fibrosis
 - Chlamydia
 - Mycoplasma
 - Syphilis
 - Tay-Sachs Disease
 - Thalassemia
 - B-Strep
 - Genital Warts
 - Gonorrhea
 - Multiple Sclerosis
 - Multiple Sclerosis
- ! Does the sperm bank check the donor's blood type? (Women who are Rh negative will need a donor who is also Rh negative.)
- \$ Does the sperm bank screen donors for drug use?
- ! Is HIV testing done on donors? Does the sperm bank follow the American Society for Reproductive Medicine's recommendation of holding specimens for 180 days, and only then using the specimen if the donor retests negative for the HIV virus?
- ! What genetic tests are done on the donor?
- ! Does the sperm bank screen the donors for the breast cancer gene (185delAG) in Ashkenazi Jewish donors?
- ! Does the sperm bank screen the donors for the autosomal recessive disorder Alpha-1 antitrypsin?
- ! Does the sperm bank keep track of the number of pregnancies per donor?
- ! Does the sperm bank offer a service for adult children conceived through DI to gain access to the donor's medical records if necessary?
- ! If the quality (motility and number of sperm specimen) is inadequate after thawing, what steps should the patient/clinic take?
- ! Does the sperm bank provide sperm that is ready for intrauterine insemination if requested?
- ! If requested, will the sperm bank work with a donor who the couple provides? If so, will the sperm bank work with an out-of-state donor?
- ! Will the sperm bank store frozen sperm so that a couple can use the same donor for a second child?
- ! What are the costs for storing pre-purchased sperm?

Questions to Ask the Clinic or doctor doing the Insemination:

- ! What is the cost of inseminations per cycle?
- ! How many inseminations are done per cycle?
- ! Is intrauterine insemination (IUI) done with or without ovulation stimulating drugs?
- ! If hCG is used to trigger ovulation, when is IUI done?

- ! Does the practice do inseminations done on weekends and holidays? If not, where does the practice refer patients?
- ! What types of legal documents/agreements are signed by the patient and physician?
- ! Is counseling required for the couple prior to beginning the program?
- ! Does the clinic refer to a particular mental health provider for counseling?
- ! Does insurance cover all or part of the donor insemination services? Does it include the counseling appointments?

Other helpful resources are the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, 1209 Montgomery Highway, Birmingham, AL 35216 and The American Association of Tissue Banks, 1350 Beverly Rd., Ste. 220-A, McLean, VA 22101.

**Copyright RESOLVE
All Rights Reserved**