

QUESTIONS TO ASK
about Donor Egg Programs (#11)

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If you are considering using donor eggs, ask the following questions before starting in a program.

MEDICAL FACTORS FOR THE RECIPIENT

- ! All recipients, regardless of age should have a complete blood count, blood tests for HIV, hepatitis B and C, cytomegalovirus, rubella, toxoplasmosis and RH factor before starting a donor egg cycle.
- ! Do you have any health problems that would be affected by a pregnancy such as cardiovascular disease? Are you on prescription medication, etc?
- ! If you are over 40 and are considering the donor egg options, make sure that you have a current electrocardiogram, mammogram, glucose tolerance test and chest film.
- ! Have you talked to an obstetrician about the risks relating to pregnancy, labor and delivery for women in your age category?
- ! Have you discussed the risks of multiple births?
- ! Have you asked about the miscarriage rate after embryo transfer?
- ! Has your husband or partner's semen been tested lately?
- ! Have you discussed a natural or artificial cycle using estrogen and progesterone to prepare the endometrium lining of your uterus. Will the clinic require a mock cycle first? Which type of estrogen is used?

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND LEGAL PREPARATION

- ! Have you gone for couple counseling to discuss the donor egg option?
- ! Is counseling provided for the donor?
- ! Is counseling provided for the donor's husband?
- ! Does the donor have children already? Has she discussed ovum donation with her children? If not, has she considered ramifications if later when she wants her own family, infertility is an issue?
- ! Is the donor aware of the need for ovulation induction and associated possible risks/complications?
- ! If the donor has a history of breast or ovarian cancer in her family, is she aware of the possible increased risk of developing cancer from using ovulation drugs?

- ! What legal contracts have been developed by the clinic?
- ! Has a written contract been negotiated? Specifics such as what to do with "extra" embryos, freezing embryos and paternal rights should all be clearly defined.
- ! Have you and your partner discussed what you will do if the child is born with any kind of birth defect?
- ! Have you decided about an amniocentesis?
- ! Have you discussed the secrecy or openness issue relative to telling the child? Who, if anyone, will you tell that you are considering or trying this option?

DONOR SELECTION AND EGG QUALITY, etc.

- ! Who are the donors if anonymous?
- § Are donors used legal residents of the United States?
- ! What is the age of the anonymous donor?
- ! Does the clinic allow you to use the donor you bring into the program or do they require that you do a cross exchange (the eggs from the donor you bring in are put into the pool and you go to the top of the list to receive an anonymous egg)?
- ! Are eggs taken from infertility patients?
- ! How many times can a donor be used?
- ! Is the donor tested for the AIDS virus, CMV, hepatitis A and B, chlamydia, venereal disease, syphilis, serum karotyping and blood type and day 3 FSH? Is a drug screen done on the donor?
- § If you are using a donor from a donor egg matching program, and the donor has been tested by them, will the IVF clinic require additional or duplicate testing at their lab?
- ! Are all eggs from one donor used for one recipient or are the eggs split between recipients? If they are split how are they divided? Is there a primary and secondary recipient?
- ! How many eggs are guaranteed a recipient and, if there are less, is the fee reduced?
- ! How long are medical records kept on the donor? Is the donor aware that, as in adoption, laws may change that could allow the child access to information about the donor at a specific age?
- ! Does the clinic maintain contact with the donor? This is important if you think you would want to use the donor again in the future. By maintaining contact, the clinic can monitor the health status of the donor as well.

Additional questions to consider if you are using a known or designated donor:

- ! Do you and the donor have separate legal counseling?
- ! What kind of relationship do you and your spouse expect to have with the donor and have you discussed it with her?
- ! What kind of relationship do you expect the donor to have with the child and have you discussed that with her?
- ! Have you discussed your feelings about having an amniocentesis with the donor and have you discussed what to do if the test results indicate a problem with the fetus?

CHOOSING THE CLINIC

- ! Ovum donation requires using IVF, ask if the IVF clinic you are considering is a member of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine's (formerly the American Fertility Society) Special Interest Group for Assisted Reproductive Technologies? (Consumer can call ASRM at 205-978-5000 to find out.)
- ! Does the clinic have its own egg donor pool? What information is shared with the recipient about the donor?
- ! Do recipients have any choice about donor selection?
- ! Clarify what type of screening and counseling is done for egg donors.
- ! What are the costs? Do you have to pay the full amount if the donor doesn't stimulate well, if few eggs are obtained or fertilization is poor?
- ! What, if anything, is covered by health insurance?
- ! What are the live birth rates from the donor-egg program you are interested in?
- ! Does the clinic freeze extra embryos?

Further information on this topic is available through RESOLVE fact sheets. For a publications order form, please contact the local chapter or National RESOLVE Office at 1310 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02144-1731 or 617/623-0744.

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