

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS EGG DONOR

Who can donate eggs?

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has specific regulations for screening egg donors (primarily for infectious diseases) and the American Society of Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) has recommendations for who should or should not donate eggs. Generally speaking, potential egg donors need to: have good physical and emotional health, appropriate weight for height, excellent personal character and be free of any obvious genetic diseases based on their personal and family medical history.

Why do some women decide to donate their eggs?

Most egg donor applicants come to RCC for various individual reasons: many know someone who has experienced infertility, they want to help infertile couples experience the joys of pregnancy and having a family, and for some the monetary compensation is also an additional incentive.

Why do recipient couples decide to use an egg donor?

Couples choose egg donation for reasons based on their individual circumstances. Some women's ovaries are incapable of producing a fertile egg. Using an egg donor and adoption are options for these couples. The benefits to choosing an egg donor would include control over the prenatal care of the developing fetus, the woman would be able to experience the joys of pregnancy, childbirth and nursing a baby and the couple would be able to use the sperm of the husband. This can be especially important when the woman has had children but the man has not.

How many times can an egg donor donate?

The American Society of Reproductive Medicine recommends that donors can donate up to six times. To the best of our knowledge this was an arbitrary recommendation but for most instances it is reasonable. We are not aware of any research or scientific data that shows additional donations are dangerous or causes additional increased risk.

What time commitment is involved in donating eggs?

Donors have two types of time commitments needed to become an egg donor, the screening process and the egg donation cycle.

Screening Process - The first time commitment expected is the egg donor screening process. It is anticipated that each form (medical and genetic history and personal information questionnaire) will each take about 30-45 minutes to fill out. Additional time may be needed to collect the family medical information. Once accepted into the egg donation program, an appointment with a doctor and the Donor Egg Coordinator will take approximately 90 minutes. The ovarian quality testing, a blood draw done on day 3 of the donor's menstrual cycle to test FSH and estradiol (after being off all forms of hormonal contraceptives for one month prior to testing) will take about 10 minutes.

Egg Donation cycle - Once egg retrieval time nears, injections and medicines need to be taken daily, and expected time is a couple of minutes daily. The egg donor will meet with a psychologist to have psychological screening which is anticipated to take 60-120 minutes. The week prior to the egg retrieval, the donor need to come to the clinic 5-7 times for blood draw testing for estradiol and transvaginal ultrasounds. Expected time is 15-30 minutes per visit. On the day of the egg retrieval, the egg retrieval itself will take about 30 minutes, and there is usually a resting/recovery time of 1-2 hours of waiting for the anesthesia to wear off. Typically the egg donor is in the office for 3-4 hours the day of the egg retrieval.

What will happen during an egg retrieval procedure?

Through ultrasound guidance, eggs are retrieved from the donor's ovaries through the vagina. The actual egg retrieval procedure will consist of a brief outpatient surgical procedure requiring general anesthesia but no incisions or suturing is required.

Will the egg donor need assistance after the egg retrieval?

The egg donor will need to have someone assist her getting home; if the egg donor does not have someone available, necessary accommodations may be made with the assistance of the Donor Egg Coordinator.

Are there risks involved with egg retrieval?

With any medical procedure there are always risks involved. Dr. James S. Heiner and Dr. Keith L. Blauer both have extensive medical and surgical experience and while it is hoped that the recipient couple will become pregnant, the prevailing concern is for the health and well being of the egg donor volunteer. There is a small risk of infection, bleeding and a 1-2% risk of ovarian hyperstimulation (OHSS). These will be discussed in more detail during your initial visit.

Will the egg donor be responsible for any medical costs incurred?

All costs are covered by the recipient couple or RCC. An insurance policy for medical complications of IVF will be taken out on the egg donor (paid for by the recipient couple through RCC). Once the egg donor begins their injectable medicine her insurance coverage begins. The policy will cover up to \$250,000 in any related complications and, to be on the far end of the safe side, a \$100,000 life insurance policy. Our commitment is to make this as safe as possible for the egg donor volunteer.

What will happen to the donated eggs once they are retrieved?

The donated eggs will be combined in the laboratory with sperm collected from the recipient's husband's sperm in order to achieve fertilization. Resultant embryos will later be transferred into the recipient's uterus. Based on the recipient couple's desires, additional embryos may be cryopreserved (frozen) to be used in the future, donated to other infertile couples, used for research or discarded.

Does the egg donor have any legal rights or responsibilities to their eggs?

Prior to donating, egg donors sign consent forms that relinquish all rights to the eggs that are retrieved, and to any parental rights, and/or responsibility to children born from those eggs.

Once the donor has completed the screening process, what will happen?

The donor will be given a donor number and will be placed on the egg donor list with all identifying information removed (names, address, etc). The egg donor will be identified to recipient couples only by their donor number. The egg donor's information will be made available to RCC patients and to out of state IVF clinics that use RCC's donors.

Once placed on the egg donor list, how long will it take until the donor is matched with a recipient couple?

RCC offers an in-house egg donor agency that allows recipient couples the option of selecting their own donor, thus how quickly a donor is matched will be based on the recipient couple patients RCC has at any given time and what particular traits a recipient couple is looking for in a donor. Each recipient couple has different priorities when deciding on the donor they would like, some factors that affect their decision are physical characteristics, education background, race, height, weight, interests and medical history. Some donors may be chosen immediately, while others may be on the list for several years before being picked and some may never get picked solely based on the fact that there was never a good match between that particular donor and the recipient couples that came to RCC.

Is the egg donor's identity ever given to the recipient couple?

At RCC, most egg donors donate anonymously to recipient couples. In an anonymous donation, the identity of either party is never given to the donor or the recipient couple. Some times a couple will come to the clinic wanting to use a family member (such as a sister or niece) or friend to be their egg donor. In these circumstances, the donor is a known donor but in all other cases identity is kept anonymous and confidential unless mutually agreed to by both parties.

What measures are taken to ensure the egg donors anonymity?

During the screening process personal and identifying information is gathered from applicants. Before the medical and genetic history forms and personal information forms are made available for potential recipients to view, all identifying information is removed. All potential recipients can view very basic

information online regarding egg donors. Only couples seriously considering egg donation are given password access to view the medical and genetic history form, the personal information questionnaire, and childhood photos for the various donors. Due to sensitivity, adult photos may only be viewed by couples at the clinic in the presence of a staff member.

What if an egg donor decides she wants to have her own children?

Egg donors can remain on RCC's egg donor list from the age of 21 until the age of 33, if desired. During this time some donors decide to have children of their own, at which time they will be removed from the list. Donors can be removed from the list temporarily, but can be put back on the list after the donor has delivered and has stopped breast feeding.

After filling out the medical and genetic history form why are some donors not accepted into RCC's egg donation program?

When reviewing medical and genetic history forms from donor applicants, the main concern is for the health of the future child, to ensure that that child will have the best chance at a healthy life. When a donor is not accepted into the program it could be for various reasons some reasons include: the donor has a strong family history of genetic or medical diseases, the donor did not completely and honestly fill out the application, or sometimes that donor has a small chance of being selected by a recipient couple. The very fact the applicant even have an interest in donating says that they are very kind and generous people.

Will donating eggs affect a donor's own fertility?

No. Excluding any rare complication there should not be any affect on a donor's own fertility. Women are born with 1-2 million eggs in their ovaries. During egg retrieval, approximately 8-20 eggs are removed. After donating, there are plenty of eggs remaining in the woman's ovaries for the woman to use when she desires to start or expand her own family. Numerous donors have children of there own after donating for multiple cycles.