

Thinking About Using Donor Sperm?



Sperm donation is an effective treatment used by many couples around the world.

There are several situations where sperm donation may be needed:

- Where a man is not producing any sperm
- Where the quality of a man's sperm is low
- Where a couple have been through IVF but have had no fertilisation
- Where a man has a genetic disorder that he may pass on to a child
- When a same sex couple want to try for a child
- When a single woman wants to try for a child

Donor sperm can be inseminated into the women's womb (donor insemination or DI) or mixed with her eggs in IVF treatment (IVF-D). For DI to be effective the woman must have patent tubes and no other causes of infertility. If there are other problems, or DI proves unsuccessful, the next step is IVF with donor sperm (IVF-D). This involves a series of injections to stimulate the women's ovaries to produce multiple eggs. These eggs are collected and fertilized with donor sperm. One or two embryos are then transferred to the womb.

If the treatment is successful you will be the legal parent of the child. In many countries, donors are anonymous and so no information can be found out about the donor. However, if you have treatment in the UK, the donors are not anonymous. As parents, you cannot find out any identifying information about the donor but any child that results from egg or sperm donation can, if they so wish, when they reach 18. It is hoped that couples using donor sperm or eggs in the UK will tell their children about their conception. If you have treatment in another country, their national rules will apply.

To be a donor the sperm has to be of higher quality than normal, as it has to survive the freezing/thawing process. Donors are also screened for genetic diseases, such as cystic fibrosis, and transmissible infections.

For further information please visit the National Gamete Donation Trust web site
www.ngdt.co.uk