



Egg Sharing

INTRODUCTION

For many years there has been a shortage of donated eggs available for women who are unable to produce or use their own eggs. Likewise, with limited NHS funding in Northern Ireland, many couples with fertility problems have been unable or unwilling to fund treatment that they need. Egg sharing may help both of these problems – it provides eggs for those who need them and also allows subsidised IVF treatment for sub-fertile couples who are prepared to share some of the eggs collected from them.

The basic principle of egg sharing is that eggs are collected and shared equally between the donor and the recipient. The minimum number of eggs for sharing is 8, giving the best chance of pregnancy for both the donor and the recipient.

Maintaining confidentiality is of utmost importance within Origin Fertility Centre. The donor and recipient will not be aware of each other's identity and will never attend the clinic at the same time.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAMME?

Donors:

- ❖ Age ideally 21-35
- ❖ Normal blood test results
- ❖ No diagnosis of Polycystic Ovarian Disease
- ❖ BMI between the range of 19-33
- ❖ Ideally have undergone a cycle of treatment with no previous history of poor ovarian response (defined as less than 8 eggs collected on standard stimulation)
- ❖ No family history of congenital abnormalities or congenital disorders
- ❖ No first degree family history of severe asthma or diabetes

Recipients:

Women who are unable to produce or to use their own eggs because;

- ❖ Ovaries never developed properly
- ❖ Early Menopause
- ❖ Have had chemotherapy or radiotherapy
- ❖ Poor response to previous fertility treatment
- ❖ Genetic conditions
- ❖ All recipients must be less than 45 years of age

HUMAN FERTILISATION AND EMBRYOLOGY AUTHORITY

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) holds information about all donors and children born as a result of egg donation.

From 1st April 2005 any child conceived as a result of egg donation will be able to contact the HFEA, (if they know they are as a result of donation), when they are 18 to find out identifying information on the donor. All the information held by the HFEA is confidential.

ASSESSMENT

If you feel that you want to take part in the programme, you may discuss it with your doctor at Origin, who will arrange for you to meet with the egg donation team.

At this meeting the process will be explained in detail and suitability to be a donor discussed. You must be fit and healthy with no history of any hereditary or genetic illness.

We are required to contact your GP to ensure that there is no reason that you should not be treated or that you should not become a donor. We will ask for your permission to carry out blood tests (as required by law) to ensure that you are not a carrier of inheritable disorders or infectious disease.

The blood tests are:

- ❖ HIV (Aids Virus)
- ❖ HTLV 1&2
- ❖ Cystic Fibrosis
- ❖ Hepatitis B&C
- ❖ Chromosome analysis (Genetic testing)
- ❖ Blood Group

- ❖ Cytomegalovirus (**Donor and Recipient blood results must be compatible**)
- ❖ Syphilis and Gonorrhoea

EGG SHARING ARRANGEMENT

The Egg Sharing works as follows:

- ❖ The women sharing your eggs will not be known to you during treatment and you will not be given any details about her. You will also not be made known to her. You can if you wish be made aware of the outcome of the recipients treatment (i.e. whether a pregnancy was achieved or not and if a baby was born). Before seeking this information you should be fully counselled by clinic staff and an independent counsellor regarding the implications of acquiring this knowledge.
- ❖ If you get 8 eggs or more, you will share them equally with her. If you get an even number, each one of you will get half the eggs.
- ❖ If fewer than 8 eggs are obtained, all the eggs are given to the provider at no extra cost to her. This means that the recipient's cycle will be cancelled but the provider could not take part in the egg sharing programme again.
- ❖ If 8 or more eggs are collected, they are divided equally between the donor and the recipient with odd numbers i.e. egg numbers 9, 11, 13 and so on, going to the provider. For example, if 11 eggs are retrieved then the recipient will get 5 and the donor will get 6.
- ❖ The donating couple may withdraw their consent at any time; however, the cycle could only then proceed if they pay the increased costs (i.e. the cost of a full treatment cycle).
- ❖ Origin will ensure that potential donors should not experience undue influence or pressure to donate eggs by centre staff, relatives or friends. If you feel pressurised in any way to donate you must inform the egg donation team.
- ❖ According to the HFEA Act 1990, you will not be the legal parent of any child resulting from the donated eggs.

COUNSELLING

Independent counselling is compulsory for all couples, donors / recipients and their partners wishing to embark upon the egg sharing programme.

Approximately 1 hour is allocated for each counselling session and both partners are seen together.

The issues involved are highly complex and some couples may wish to withdraw themselves from the programme once they have taken everything into consideration.

Everything about the treatment, legal requirements and possible future problems are discussed.

Counselling is an opportunity to consider whether you want to proceed and also to ask questions and clarify for yourself what donation will actually mean to you, your partner and your family.

In donating eggs, donor suitability will be discussed. For donors with children, the implications for themselves and their existing families and for childless donors, the implications for themselves and any future families.

MOVING FORWARD

In addition to your usual consent forms, you will be asked to sign a form releasing approximately 50% of the eggs retrieved from you to be used by a matched recipient. Where embryos are to be stored the consent forms of the donor and the male recipient must be consistent, this will be clarified at consultant review.

If very few egg follicles are seen at your Day 11 scan, it is possible that the cycle will be abandoned. If this happened, you would not be able to take part in further egg sharing schemes, although we will still discuss treatment for you as an 'ordinary' patient.

WHAT NEXT?

If you feel you would like to be involved in an egg sharing arrangement please contact the egg donation team to arrange an appointment. The egg donation nurse will discuss the treatment and complete a medical questionnaire. The blood screening may also be done at this stage.

If you would like to discuss egg sharing further please call our egg share coordinator Julie Hinks on 028 9076 1713 or email julieh@originfertilitycare.com.