

Title: My Future Fertility – The Risks and Rewards of Becoming an Egg Donor

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Why Become an Egg Donor?

Becoming an egg donor can be rewarding in more ways than one. Here is a brief introduction to egg donation and why it's a safe way to help someone else start a family.

- Egg donation is becoming a commonplace and routine part of fertility treatment for thousands of women who are unable to produce quality eggs of their own.
- The old stigmas are breaking down, and public opinion is catching up with the wonders of science and medicine.
- The ovarian stimulation and egg retrieval process of egg donation is just the first part of an In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) cycle, and IVF has been around since the 1970s. It is tried and tested.
- The donation process is actually the exact same process as IVF or freezing your eggs – the only difference is you're donating them.
- Donating your eggs can be an amazing way to help families struggling with infertility while making up to \$10,000 a cycle.

Is It Safe?

The biggest question on your mind is probably whether it's actually safe to be an egg donor.

Doctors have been doing this for a long time. In the decades since the first IVF baby was born, the process has been refined, perfected, and extensively monitored for safety.

For most women, going through an egg donation cycle has minimal risk.

The Egg Donor Screening Process

Lower your risk factors with a thorough egg donor screening.

The very first stage of the egg donation process starts with a thorough screening to make sure you are a good candidate.

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This is important for *your own health*, as well as ensures that you can produce high-quality eggs.

At the fertility clinic...

- Doctors perform blood tests and scans to learn if your hormone levels are where they should be and that your ovaries are healthy and functioning normally.
- The screening tests help remove much of the risk by identifying potential problems before you start taking medication to stimulate your ovaries.
- You will be asked to take certain precautions to lower your risk factors further:
 - Refrain from drinking alcohol
 - Do not have sex during the donation cycle

The Donation Process

Our process is designed to make sure you are informed and comfortable as well as physically and psychologically prepared to become an egg donor.

Step 1: Matching

- You complete an application and are matched with intended parents.
- Most prospective parents are interested in a donor with physical characteristics and a personality profile that matches their own.
- Most egg donations are anonymous. There is usually no contact between you and the waiting family.
- Your confidentiality and privacy are assured both now and in the future.

Step 2: Screening

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- You are scheduled for a medical screening and psychological evaluation at an SCRC location. You can bring company if you like.
- We will run blood tests, scans, and other screening to make sure you are in good health and that you will respond to the fertility medications safely and well.
- You will meet with someone to discuss your thoughts and feelings about egg donation and ensure you understand all the details and feel good about everything before you begin.

Step 3: Donor Contract

- An attorney assists and supports you in reviewing your donor contract.
- We make sure you have given your full consent and that any concerns about legal issues in the future are addressed before moving forward.
- Compensation is arranged. Typically, you receive part of the compensation upon beginning the fertility medication.
- The rest of the compensation is provided within five business days of completing the egg retrieval procedure.

Step 4: Ovarian Stimulation and Egg Retrieval

- You receive a calendar outlining the medical protocol and information on egg retrieval.
- It includes a schedule of fertility medication based on your menstrual cycle.
- The date of the egg retrieval procedure is provided.
- The retrieval process, which is performed under sedation, and follow-up is completed and monitored for your well-being.

What are the risks and side-effects of donating your eggs?

While egg donation is not 100% risk-free, we do everything we can to ensure you remain completely informed and provide full consent before

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you begin. Here are some very rare complications and side-effects you may wish to know.

Blood Draws and Injections

- Several blood tests are performed during the cycle.
- You will be required to self-inject fertility medications.
- There may be some discomfort, a little redness, or a small bruise at the injection site.

Fertility Medication Side-effects

- The fertility medications to stimulate your ovaries are hormones provided in larger doses than your body usually makes.
- The medications are timed to put your cycle on the right schedule and in amounts that will encourage your ovaries to mature more eggs.
- You may notice some mild side-effects, which often mimic the symptoms of PMS.
 - Bloating
 - Headache
 - Sore breasts
 - Moodiness
- Some women notice a small weight gain, but that will usually disappear after their next period.
- In extremely rare cases, an allergic reaction to the medication is possible.

Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syndrome (OHSS)

- This is a rare side-effect (less than a 5% chance of happening in any given cycle).
- It happens when a woman's ovaries over-react to the fertility medication.

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- OHSS can cause symptoms like severe bloating, abdominal pain, and nausea.
- The screening tests you go through before beginning the cycle along with careful monitoring and dosing will all help lower the likelihood of developing OHSS.

Most cases of OHSS are mild and go away by themselves in about a week, but in extremely rare cases, this condition can become more serious.

If an egg donor experiences vomiting or shortness of breath, a doctor is contacted immediately.

Lowering the dose of medication or stopping the cycle can prevent medical complications which including damage to the ovaries.

Egg Retrieval and Potential Complications

- You visit the clinic after taking the fertility medications and receiving the “trigger shot” ending the ovarian stimulation.
- The egg retrieval process is a short procedure, which lasts about 30 minutes and is very safe.
- The clinic will give you light sedation so you won’t feel any pain and probably won’t remember the procedure at all.
- After the procedure, you stay in the recovery room while the nursing team keeps an eye on you for about an hour, until you feel fully awake.
- *Very rarely*, patients have an adverse reaction to the anesthetic.
- *Extremely rarely*, a patient experiences bleeding or infection as a result of egg retrieval.

The risks and side-effects of egg donation are about the same as any common, moderately invasive medical procedure, which means that it can be considered very safe in general. There are no known long-term adverse effects or health problems linked to donating your eggs.

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It will not affect your ability to have your own children in the future.

Promote and Protect Your Current and Future Fertility

You can promote and protect your own fertility with healthy lifestyle choices. (Information sourced from the Mayo Clinic)

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/getting-pregnant/in-depth/female-fertility/art-20045887>

Most successful egg donors are young women, but you may be concerned about your own ability to conceive later in your life.

Egg donation does little to reduce your chance of getting pregnant yourself, and you can protect and promote your own fertility by living a healthy life. However, age does play a role in female fertility. Understand that delaying pregnancy can make it more difficult to conceive.

- Maintain a healthy weight. Being overweight or significantly underweight can inhibit normal ovulation.
- Prevent sexually transmitted infections such as chlamydia and gonorrhea, which are leading causes of infertility in women.
- Avoid working the night shift if possible. You may be at higher risk of infertility. Working the night shift may affect hormone production. If you do work nights, try to get enough sleep when you are off work.
- Minimize stress and practice healthy coping methods like relaxation techniques before and while you are trying to conceive a baby yourself.
- Don't smoke, limit the amount of alcohol and caffeine you drink, do not overexercise, and avoid exposure to toxins.

Tobacco use ages your ovaries and depletes your eggs prematurely. Heavy drinking creates an increased risk of ovulation disorders.

Lowering your **caffeine intake** to one or two six-to-eight ounce cups of coffee a day may improve your fertility.

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Overexercising can inhibit ovulation and reduce progesterone production.

Environmental toxins and pollutants like pesticides, dry-cleaning solvents, and lead, can adversely affect fertility.

Conclusion

What an exciting prospect! Give someone the gift of a long-desired baby and build a nest egg for yourself. With rising student loans and the increasing start-up costs of adulthood, becoming an egg donor is an attractive option for altruistic, healthy young women who also want to help make dreams come true.

The most important part of the process is for you to be completely informed while making your decision. Every agency or clinic you work with should be 100% committed to giving you all the information you need to choose whether egg donation is right for you.

Why You Should Choose Bright Expectations

Choosing to donate your eggs is a powerful and personal decision. Here at Bright Expectations, we understand that when you choose to partner with us, you should feel you are in the best possible place, with the best possible team, and the best possible chance of helping someone have a baby.

This is what drives our innovation, our devotion to excellence, and our sensitivity to the unique needs of each donor. Bright Expectations offers you access to an exceptional team of reproductive specialists, the most advanced technologies, cutting-edge facilities, and a safe and comfortable egg-donation experience.