

Cambridge IVF

Information for potential sperm donors – the donation process

Thank you for expressing an interest in becoming a sperm donor. The following information is intended to give you an overview of the sperm donation process. Further information regarding becoming a donor is available on our website.

Why do we need to recruit sperm donors?

An increasing proportion of couples who can't have a baby discover the reason for this is because of issues with sperm quality. In these situations the only treatment option we can offer to them is the use of donor sperm we collect and store from people like you. Your donated samples would also commonly be used in fertility treatment provided to same-sex couples, and to single women wishing to start a family.

Who can be a sperm donor?

In order to become a sperm donor at Cambridge IVF, you will need to meet the following criteria:

- ✓ Be between the ages of 18 and 45 years
- ✓ Be a non-smoker for at least three months
- ✓ Be fit and healthy with a BMI between 19 and 30
- ✓ Have no previous history of testicular surgery
- ✓ Have no personal history of transmissible diseases
- ✓ Have no personal or family history of inheritable diseases

Donors can be recruited in a number of ways:

- **Self-recruited** 'Known' donors: These are donors who are known to the recipient (individual receiving the donated sperm) such as a relative or friend who is willing to donate their sperm to them.
- **Clinic recruited** donors – These are donors recruited by Cambridge IVF who have altruistically donated their sperm for use by recipients unknown to them.

Donation is purely on a voluntary basis and no payment, other than compensation for reasonable expenses incurred, is allowed to be made to individuals who kindly decide to donate.

What is the process of sperm donation?

Questionnaires and Telephone Screening

After you have completed our initial online questionnaire, a member of the Andrology team will contact you if you appear to be suitable to be a donor. We will then go through the screening questionnaire to clarify your general health status, family history and reasons for donating. If the questionnaire indicates you are not able to become a sperm donor at this time, we will let you know and explain why.

Following the questionnaire, if you are still suitable to become a potential donor we will schedule a semen analysis and sperm freeze test appointment with you.

Semen analysis & test freeze

We need to assess your sperm quality to ensure that the very strict requirements to become a donor are met. This includes a comprehensive semen analysis and a test freeze. This is where we freeze a small part of your sample, thaw it, and assess the post-thaw quality. It is important that post-thaw quality is suitable for fertility treatment, and the failure of sperm to survive the freezing process is the biggest cause of donor rejection. If the first sample you provide is of borderline quality we will request a second (and possibly third) sample before we can accept you.

We will inform you of all results from this stage and answer any questions you may have. Please be aware that rejection as a sperm donor does not always indicate you are sub fertile, and indeed a sizeable proportion of men who volunteer as donors who already have children themselves will still be rejected. If your semen analysis result is significantly abnormal we will offer you an appointment to discuss the results in more detail.

Counselling

Becoming a donor is a big emotional decision for you and everyone involved. Counselling happens early in the process to ensure you're fully informed and prepared prior to donating your sperm. It's vital that you understand the implications of becoming a sperm donor so you can give informed consent.

Donating your sperm can affect others in your family too, for example your partner, parents and any existing children you may have. Counselling enables you – and your partner if you have one – to discuss how you feel about this privately and confidentially with our trained fertility counsellor. This support can help to ease your mind and reassure your family before moving forward with the donation process.

Medical questionnaire & assessment

If your semen analysis and post-thaw sperm quality is suitable, we will arrange a medical screening appointment. This will include a detailed medical history form which will cover your health and that of your family. We may need to contact your GP, with your consent, to confirm

your suitability as a donor. A physical examination will be carried out by one of our Doctors, and blood tests/swabs carried out for the following:

- Karyotype – to check the number and visual appearance of your chromosomes
- Cystic fibrosis carrier status - to see if you are a carrier of the Cystic Fibrosis gene
- HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HTLV, CMV – to check whether you have any infectious diseases
- Syphilis, Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea - to check whether you have any ongoing sexually transmitted infections

We may carry out additional blood tests if there is anything in your history to indicate that you may be at a higher risk of other diseases. Please be aware that during the screening process you could find out something about your own fertility or health that you weren't otherwise aware of. If this happens we will, with your consent, refer you to an appropriate medical specialist and offer counselling.

Consents

Once all screening and assessments are completed, you will be invited to complete a set of consent forms. This includes registering you as a donor and records your consent for your samples to be stored and used in the assisted conception treatment of others. You can withdraw or modify consent at any time by contacting Cambridge IVF.

Donating your samples

Once you are registered as a donor, you can begin the donation process. This will involve 10 to 20 visits to the clinic to produce a sample on-site, which we will then freeze in our cryostore. Once an adequate number of samples are frozen we will organise a date, 3-6 months after your final donation, for you to return to the clinic for a final blood and urine screen. This will allow your sperm to be released from quarantine and offered to other patients for use in their own fertility treatment journey.

Where can I find more support and information?

Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority (HFEA)

UK's government regulator responsible for making sure fertility clinics and research centres comply with the law. This website provides free, clear and impartial information on UK fertility clinics, IVF and other types of fertility treatment, and donation.

Website: www.hfea.gov.uk

Tel: 02072 918 200

Sperm, Egg And Embryo Donation (SEED) Trust

A registered charity, the SEED website provides a hub of clear and practical information about donating and receiving eggs, sperm and embryos in the UK.

Website: www.seedtrust.org.uk

Donor Conception Network

A supportive network of more than 2,000 mainly UK based families with children conceived with donated sperm, eggs or embryos, those considering or undergoing donor conception procedures; and donor conceived people.

Website: www.dcnetwork.org

Tel: 02072 782 608

British Infertility Counselling Association (BICA)

A registered charity and the UK's leading professional fertility counselling association. BICA is recognised by both the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority and the British Fertility Society. The website includes a list of counsellors able to provide specialist fertility counselling to both patients and donors.

Website: www.bica.net

Fertility Network UK

The UK's leading patient-focused fertility charity, able to provide free and impartial support, advice, information and understanding for anyone affected by fertility issues. The website gives access to a community of people affected by fertility problems and provides a free Support Line if required.

Website: www.fertilitynetworkuk.org

Tel: 01424 732 361

Fertility Friends

An active self-help community for people experiencing infertility. This site features a forum of message boards and live chat rooms on a range of topics.

Website: www.fertilityfriends.co.uk

Contact us:

We hope you have found this booklet informative. We realise we may not have covered all of your questions so if you do have any other queries we are here to help so please contact us via any of the means below:

Cambridge IVF
Kefford House
Maris Lane
Trumpington
Cambridge
CB2 9LG

Tel: 01223 349010

Email: enquiries@cambridgeivf.org.uk

Website: www.cambridgeivf.org.uk

For more information about getting to Cambridge IVF please see our website:
<https://www.cambridge-ivf.org.uk/contacting-us-and-getting-referred/getting-here>



Smoking.



We are smoke-free: smoking is not allowed anywhere on the hospital campus. For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:



Help accessing this information in other formats is available. To find out more about the services we provide, please telephone 01223 256998 or visit our patient information help page:

<https://www.cuh.nhs.uk/contact-us/accessible-information>



Document history

Natalie Smith
Cambridge IVF

Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Hills
Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ www.cuh.org.uk

01223 349010
May 2023/May 2024
The Donation Process
V1.0

Patient information A4 template v19