

Information About Embryo Donation for Intended Parents

The Adoption Center for Family Building is a not-for-profit, non-sectarian licensed adoption agency in Illinois and Indiana. We have developed an **Embryo Donation Program** to assist both donors and intended families. The program operates in tandem with local fertility centers and attorneys specializing in reproductive law. The Adoption Center offers social, psychological and educational services surrounding the embryo donation process.

Who is eligible to be a recipient in an embryo donation?

- The intended mother's age may not exceed 47 (at the time of application).
- Couple/individual must be residing in the United States.
- Couples/individual must complete a family study.*
- The combined age of intended parents may not exceed 100.
- The intended mother must be cleared by a medical doctor to carry a pregnancy.

**The family study is designed to prepare the couple/individual for parenting a child born to them through embryo donation.

What is the process?

Once you've received the "go ahead" from your physician (to carry a pregnancy), you may schedule a consultation with an Adoption Center Director to learn more about the embryo donation process and explore your options. Step two is to meet with a physician (at the Fertility Clinic) that will be doing the transfer. Step three is to obtain clearances from a qualified mental health professional at your Fertility Clinic or in the private sector. The intended parents would then consult with an attorney specializing in embryo donation to discuss legal considerations.

Next, the adoption agency would conduct a family study. The family study must be completed before the agency will share the intended parent's profile with potential donors. In an open donation process, the agency would arrange phone calls or meetings between the donor and intended parents. When a match occurs, the donor's attorney and the intended parent's attorney would develop the legal agreements. Once contracts have been signed by both parties you would schedule the embryo transfer would follow.

Why are medical and mental health clearances necessary?

The Fertility Clinic will require a comprehensive evaluation and test for certain diseases to ensure the best conditions for successful implantation and a healthy pregnancy. A mental health professional is able to evaluate the psycho-social readiness of the couple/individual.

Will the genetic parents be aware of our identity or of the child if we are successful?

That depends. We offer both anonymous and open donation services. Your chances of being accepted as the receiving parents will be greater if you agree to various options. Our counselors will help you determine the options that are best for you.

What is the relationship between the donor and the recipient family?

Depending on your wishes, the relationship between you and the donor couple may be anonymous or there may be varying degrees of contact (including one or more meetings). You may want to think about the characteristics that you are seeking in a donor family. You will also decide whether you want to maintain ongoing contact with the donor family. It is important to note that your flexibility with openness may offer you more opportunities.

Is this really adoption?

Adoption is a legal mechanism that transfers the rights and responsibilities of a child from one set of parents to another. Embryo donation does not fall under that legal framework. It will be necessary to consult with a qualified attorney regarding your rights and the ways in which legal agreements are used to govern the embryo donation process. It should be noted that under Illinois law, the person giving birth to the child is the presumed mother of that child.

Is embryo donation medically safe?

The embryo donors complete health histories and undergo disease screening prior to retrieving the sperm and eggs to create their embryos. This makes embryo donation a safe procedure.

Does this technique cause birth defects?

According to the CDC, birth defects are no more common with this technique than with standard in vitro fertilization.

What are my chances for a successful pregnancy?

The NEDC's overall pregnancy rate per transfer is 48%. Not all embryos survive the freeze/thaw process, and thawing of your selected embryos may not lead to a transfer. Locally, the pregnancy rate at the Fertility Center of Illinois (FCI) is 34% per transfer.

How many embryos will be transferred to my uterus?

You will need to refer to your fertility clinic doctor regarding the maximum number of embryos **they would transfer. It should be noted that not all embryos survive the thawing process.**

Is there a chance for multiple births?

The clinic will limit the number of embryos transferred, but there is no guarantee that you will not have multiple births. Your options to control this will be discussed during counseling.

Could the children from the embryo donation inadvertently meet their siblings and reproduce?

In our large society, the risk is small and knowing the recipient family would further minimize any risk that may exist. The Center will maintain records for years to come, in case information needs to be retrieved by the child or parents.

Are donors paid for their embryos?

Donors are not paid. However you may be asked to reimburse the donors for some or all of the expenses that were incurred through the donation process.

What are the costs of embryo donation?

Costs vary depending upon the costs incurred in obtaining the embryos (transport fees). However, the total expenses should be considerably less than the cost of a standard in vitro fertilization cycle. For an itemization of the agency fees involved, please view the Adoption Center fee schedule. The infertility clinic can provide cost information for the medical procedures. Your insurance carrier may cover some of the medical costs. Check with your accountant to determine if you would be eligible to take an itemized deduction for personal medical care expenses paid during the taxable year.

What is the first step?

Call the Adoption Center for Family Building at 1-847-674-3231 and ask for Tobi or Maggie. If we are unavailable to speak with you at the time of your call, please leave your contact information and we will call you back.

STEPS IN THE EMBRYO DONATION PROCESS

- I. Obtain medical clearance from a licensed physician to insure that the recipient is able to carry a pregnancy
- II. Consultation with Adoption Center Director
- III. Schedule consultation with a physician at the Fertility Clinic
- IV. Meet with a qualified mental health professional (a list will be provided)
- V. Meet with your attorney to discuss legal considerations
- VI. Family Study is conducted by the adoption agency
- VII. Recipient profile is shared with donor families
- VIII. Meetings/calls between donors and recipients may follow
- IX. Legal contracts signed by both parties
- X. Embryo transfer is scheduled with Fertility Center
- XI. Subsequent transfers may follow
- XII. Agency services will be available to assist intended parents throughout their pregnancy
- XIII. Agency services will continue post-birth, as requested

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