

Sperm Donation

Information for donors



Welcome

This booklet explains the process of sperm donation at Leeds Fertility.

You can find further information at:
www.leedsfertilityclinic.co.uk

If you would like to begin the process of screening to become a donor, please email: leedsth-tr.spermdonors@nhs.net or call **0113 206 3416** and leave your name and contact details and state that you would like to be a sperm donor and we will get in touch very shortly.

How to contact us:

Please see page 24 for urgent and non-urgent contact details.

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What is sperm donation and why is it needed?

For some people, using donated sperm is the only chance they have to conceive.

There are several reasons why some people use donated sperm. Some men may have very low or no sperm production from the testes which can be due to a number of reasons (usually from birth, or because of cancer treatment, but can also be because of a blockage or other rarer causes).

Sperm donation is the only route for fertility treatment for women in a same-sex relationship and for single women.

There are some rare conditions that are inherited through the male line. Some couples may choose to avoid the risk of having a child with a serious disability who may suffer handicap and a short life expectancy, by using sperm from a donor who does not carry the condition in his genes.

Success rates:

Please see our website for our latest figures and the HFEA website for the figures for babies born in the last year.

Who can be a donor?

Sperm donation is a remarkable and special thing to consider.

It is a voluntary act of kindness to help a woman or couple to achieve their dream of having a family. In the UK, donating sperm is a gift, like blood and organ (kidney, heart etc) donation.

The basics

Ideally, donors should be healthy men between 18 and 41 years with no known history of inheritable illnesses in their family.

Anonymous volunteers

Some men come forward voluntarily as a result of learning about the process through some form of publicity or knowing the story of someone in need. All anonymous donors must be under 46 years old.

Men recruited by the recipient in need of donor sperm ('known donors')

Some patients may choose to use sperm from someone they know, for personal, ethnic, cultural or religious reasons. Donation between relatives is not uncommon e.g. brothers.

Donors will only be accepted if

- There is no relevant personal or family history (to be confirmed by their GP) that would make them unsuitable.
- All their screening tests are normal.
- They have been assessed by the Leeds Fertility team as suitable to donate.
- They have signed all the relevant consent forms.

What do I need to know about being a sperm donor?

Who can find out what information about me and my donation?

Any child born after sperm, egg or embryo donation has a legal right to find out about their donor by directly applying to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), which is the regulatory authority for fertility clinics in the UK.

Under the age of 16 years, your donor-conceived child's parent(s) can apply to the HFEA on their behalf to obtain information about you:

- Physical description (height, weight, eye, hair and skin colour).
- Year of birth.
- Ethnicity.
- Whether you had any children at the time of donation.
- Any additional information you chose to supply such as your occupation, religion, interests and a brief self-description or pen-portrait.
- Whether you agreed to share your identity with them when they turn 18 (if you donated and they were conceived before 1st April 2005, when anonymous donation was legal).
- They can also find out the number, sex and year of birth of all your donor-conceived children.

When they reach the age of 16 years, they can access the following information about you:

- Physical description (height, weight, and eye, hair and skin colour).

- Year and country of birth.
- Ethnic group.
- Did you have any genetic children when registering to be a donor, and if so how many, and whether any other children have been born through your donation, and the number and sex of those children.
- Other details you may have chosen to supply (occupation, religion and interests).
- The ethnic group(s) of your parents.
- Whether you were adopted or donor conceived (if you were aware of this).
- Your marital status (at the time of donation).
- Details of any screening tests and medical history taken at the time of your donation.
- Skill, ability or talent that you have stated.
- Your reason for wanting to donate (if you have provided this information).
- They will also be access your goodwill message and your pen-portrait if you have provided this information.

At 18 years, they can access the following additional information:

- Your name, date of birth and last known address.

The Donor Sibling Link

A donor-conceived child conceived after 1st August 1991 can find out, at the age of 16 years onwards, how many donor-conceived siblings they have, their gender and their year of birth.

From the age of 18 years, they can join the Donor Sibling Link to exchange their contact details with other adults who share you as the donor, provided they've also joined the Donor Sibling Link or they join in the future.

What information can you find out about children conceived through your donation?

You can apply to the HFEA to find out the number, gender and year of birth of children born through your donation.

Legal parenthood: Who is the parent in the eyes of the Law?

The recipient is the legal parent. The donor has no rights or responsibilities over the child. Both you, the donor, and the recipient or recipients (both partners in a couple) will sign consent forms clearly stating that this has been understood.

The parents do not have to tell the child they were conceived from donated sperm. Leeds Fertility will encourage the recipient or recipients to tell the child and help them to manage the subject sensitively and appropriately.

How does the clinic match donors and recipients in anonymous treatments?

The clinic aims to match basic physical characteristics such as ethnicity (skin colour / tone), hair and eye colour, physical build. You are invited to provide a short paragraph about yourself, a 'Pen-portrait', which you would be happy to be shared with the recipient or recipients and with the child when appropriate. It is not compulsory to share any further information about yourself if you prefer not to. Sometimes the child does not clearly look like either the sperm donor or the recipient. This is no different to children who are conceived naturally.

What support is available to help me decide whether to go ahead or not, and what if I change my mind?

All donors and recipients of sperm are counselled in detail regarding the implications of their decisions and actions. Leeds Fertility has a duty to ensure that the welfare of any child resulting from any of our treatments is assured, to the best of our ability. You will be supported in reaching the decision that is right for you. There are many other resources available including the National Gamete Donation Trust, Donor Conception Network and local support groups of families with donor-conceived children. **(See Useful resources section on page 22).**

We would hope and expect that you are comfortable and sure of your decision before you donate sperm. However, you have the right to withdraw consent at any stage in the process or after you have donated the sperm in which case further treatments with your stored sperm and any embryos created using your donated sperm, and stored, will be halted.

If you have any doubts you should NOT begin sperm donation. Further counselling will be offered.

Will I be paid or will it cost me anything?

The HFEA permits limited financial compensation to the donor up to £35 per clinic visit and it is illegal to pay sperm donors more than their reasonable expenses incurred (see www.hfea.gov.uk).

Can my donated sperm be used to create more than one family?

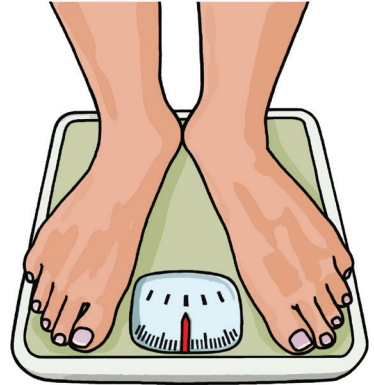
It is possible for your sperm to be used to create more than one family. The Law restricts the number of families created by a single donor to 10. Each family may have several children.

What are the risks of the screening process?

As you go through the preparation for donation, information may come to light which you would not have found out otherwise. For example, the clinic will need to perform a semen analysis to determine whether you will be a suitable (good) donor.

Finding out that your own fertility may not be as good as you expected may cause worry and distress. We also need to test for genetic conditions and infections to minimise the risks to the recipient and potential offspring. The clinic will support you and direct you to appropriate services as needed.

How can I prepare myself to donate my sperm?



- Stop smoking completely.
- Reduce alcohol intake to 3 to 4 units per week.
- You should aim for normal body weight for your height.
- A healthy, varied diet and regular physical exercise are helpful for overall health, weight management and stress reduction.
- Consider carefully the use of complimentary therapies, and please inform us what you are using / doing. Other supplements that have not undergone conventional medicine testing will not be recommended. Sports supplements from unconventional sources (e.g. muscle-bulking steroids) are harmful to fertility and should be absolutely avoided.

How does the process work?

The donor recruitment process begins with a questionnaire which you will be sent to you. You will return the completed form and Leeds Fertility will respond with notice of an appointment if you appear to be a suitable donor.

We will perform a semen analysis as well as a test to see how well your sperm survive the freezing-thawing process.

Face to face consultations will follow before further tests are carried out.

Screening tests include:

Tests to make sure you are not at risk of transmitting any infection:

- Blood tests for antibodies to viruses (HIV, Hepatitis A, B and C, Syphilis and CMV).
- Urine test for chlamydia and gonorrhoea detection.

Tests to minimise the risk of genetic conditions being passed on:

- Chromosome screen (Karyotype).
- Cystic fibrosis screen.
- Screening for blood disorders (thalassaemia, sickle cell disease) and Tay Sach's Disease in relevant ethnic groups.

In what ways is donated sperm used for fertility treatment?

Intrauterine insemination (IUI)

The frozen sperm is thawed out, and inseminated within the womb of the recipient around the time of ovulation (for further details, please see our information booklet on IUI, or our website).

In-vitro fertilisation (IVF)

The frozen sperm is thawed out and mixed with the recipient's eggs. Those eggs that fertilise and produce embryos are kept in an incubator with a view to selecting the best embryo for transfer back into the womb. Any further good quality embryos can be frozen for use by the recipient at a later date. (For further details, please see our information booklet on IVF or our website).

Preimplantation genetic testing (PGT)

Pre-implantation genetic testing (PGT) helps people with an inherited condition in their family to avoid passing it on to their children. It involves checking the genes and/or chromosomes of embryos created through in vitro fertilization (IVF). An inherited condition is caused by a change (called a mutation) in a gene.

A woman who wishes to conceive using donated sperm may have an inherited condition, and wish to get pregnant using IVF with PGT in order to be sure her children will not suffer from the condition or pass it on to their children. In this process, eggs will be taken from her ovaries. They will be fertilised by your sperm and several embryos will be created in the laboratory. These will be made up of unique combinations of genes from the egg and the sperm.

Some of these embryos will have the genetic change inherited from the mother and be affected with the genetic condition in her family. Some will not be affected. When the embryos are a few days old, we are able to test which ones carry the genetic change.

The way we test the embryos is to look at the DNA code near the affected gene; a little like a DNA fingerprint. We can compare the targeted DNA fingerprint from your blood sample with the same target in each embryo, and with the mother's sample, to see what combination of genes the embryo has inherited. Those embryos that have inherited the changed gene from the mother will be discarded.

Will you test my DNA to see if I carry any inheritable conditions, if I choose to donate a blood sample to help women who need PGT and donor sperm?

The DNA testing we carry out as part of the PGT process will not reveal anything about your genetic health. However, as part of the routine screening required prior to sperm donation you will have a test for some common genetic problems, for example Cystic Fibrosis. We will discuss these results with you before you proceed with sperm donation.

Which genetic conditions will it be possible to test for?

There are a number of genetic conditions that PGT is used for. When using donor sperm these are conditions that affect the woman directly or are carried in the woman's genetic make-up and can be passed on from the woman to her child. These include conditions caused by a mutation on the X chromosome such as the bleeding disorder haemophilia or muscle weakness condition muscular dystrophy.

In these situations the woman is usually a 'carrier' of the condition. She does not have it herself but she can pass it on to her child. It is also used in situations where the woman herself is affected by a genetic condition, e.g. Marfan Syndrome or neurofibromatosis.

Will my DNA be identifiable?

Your DNA will be labelled with your unique Leeds Fertility number and your date of birth. You will also be assigned a unique genetics laboratory number.

Who can I contact for more information?

The Genetic Counsellors at Leeds Teaching Hospitals who work alongside Leeds Fertility will be happy to discuss any issues or concerns you may have regarding PGT. **Please see page 24 for details.**

General legal information about how Leeds Fertility is regulated and conducts its work

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology (HFE) Act (1990, amended 2008) and the HFE Authority (HFEA) regulate all treatments involving human eggs, sperm and embryos. The HFEA issues the Code of Practice that we work by and it inspects us regularly to ensure standards are maintained. All UK clinic results are reported to them and are publicly available (www.hfea.gov.uk).

HFEA register

The Authority keeps a confidential register of identifying information on all patients, their treatments, donors, recipients and children born after HFEA licensed treatments.

Access to the confidential register is restricted to donor-conceived individuals only.

Confidentiality of fertility treatment

All information regarding your donation is **strictly confidential** under our HFEA Licence and is subject to both the HFE Act and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). We may **only** communicate with your general practitioner, other doctors and other carers **with your written consent**.

Your sperm analysis results will be securely kept within the Leeds Fertility (LF) database and not accessible to anyone outside Leeds Fertility.

Once we have disclosed treatment information to individuals who are not subject to the HFEA Licence (e.g. your GP) that information can no longer be controlled by us in its onward travel. It will still be regulated by the GDPR and General Law of Confidentiality, as for all private medical information.

In general practice, information will be accessible to other GPs and staff working within the practice even if your consent specifically named only one of the several GPs in your practice. When changing GPs, your medical records will be transferred to your new GP practice without any regard for any specific named consent you gave us in the past. The General Law of Confidentiality will apply. Leeds Fertility patients should be aware that Leeds Teaching Hospitals uses a password-protected system for the requesting and reporting of medical investigations (other than LF sperm testing) to which healthcare providers have access within the hospital and in Primary Care (General Practice).

Professional conduct dictates that a healthcare provider should only access results for a patient under their specific care. Inappropriate access to results is a disciplinary offense and all usage of the system is audited.

From time to time your notes may be inspected at Leeds Fertility for audit (standards checking) by other officials e.g. HFEA members, Care Quality Commission, Patient Safety Agency and National Care Standards Commission. You have the right to decline consent to share your fertility information but we need to consider your reasons for declining consent in our assessments.

Welfare of future children

The Law states that *'a woman shall not be provided with treatment services unless account has been taken of the welfare of any child who may be born as a result of the treatment (including the need of that child for a father), and of any other child (other children in the household or the family) who may be affected by the birth'*.

It is therefore our legal responsibility to have a written procedure for assessing the Welfare of the Future Child and that of any other existing child who may be affected by our treatment.

Factors considered in the assessment include:

- The recipient (and her partner's) commitment to having and bringing up a child.
- The recipient (and her partner's) ability to provide a stable and supportive environment for the child/children.
- The recipient and her partner's medical and family histories, considering factors that may risk the child's wellbeing.

- The recipient (and her partner's) health (including their ages) and their ability to provide maternal and paternal nurturing to the child.
- The recipient (and her partner's) ability to meet the needs of the children in the event of a multiple birth.
- Any risk of harm e.g. that of inherited disorders, transmissible disease, neglect or abuse.
- Any risk a new born may put on the welfare of any existing child with in the family.

Our protocol has been approved by our local ethics committee.

Consents

Fully informed consent is important and it is critical to ensuring you and we understand our respective responsibilities in all possible circumstances. Further relevant information will be provided through the process in written and spoken forms. Please do not sign until you are completely clear and satisfied with your stated position.

Your consent advises us of your informed choice but does not commit you to undergo any form of treatment. You have the right to change your mind until, but not after your sperm has been used for the treatment of a recipient (insemination or transfer of an embryo fertilized by your sperm).

It is vital that all the issues are thoroughly considered beforehand and it would be very unusual for consent to be withdrawn after donation had taken place.

Frozen embryos

The best quality embryo (s) produced during fresh IVF is / are selected at the time of fresh transfer. Further good quality embryos may be stored. Poor grade embryos have a low chance of surviving the freeze-thaw process such that freezing is not a sensible option. Approximately 90% of good quality embryos survive the process and have a good chance of resulting in a pregnancy if they are intact.

Embryo freezing can only be performed with prior written consent of the recipient (s). The legal storage limit for embryos is 10 years from the date of freezing. The period of storage can be extended under exceptional clinical circumstances, with the agreement of a fertility specialist doctor. The recipients also have to decide the fate of their embryos in the event of death or mental incapacitation of one or both partners.

Embryo donation

The recipient couple could consider donating embryos created from your sperm to help another couple. Before we can accept embryos for this purpose, the first recipients would both be required to have counselling to ensure all the implications have been considered, and the necessary screening tests would need to be completed. They might opt to do this if they have completed their family, or decided not to pursue their own treatment any further.

Sperm / Embryo research

All human embryo research requires specific permission (License) from the HFEA for the project in question. All research is experimental and embryos used or created during the project cannot be transferred for treatment after the project has finished.

They must be allowed to perish. The recipient(s) may be offered the option to donate embryos for research, only if there is an active project running during the remaining time period available for the embryos to be in storage. Once the legal storage period is up, the embryos will have to be discarded. Embryos destined for research are anonymised which means that there will be no feedback to you of the outcome of the experiments.

Occasionally, embryos may be specifically used in genetic projects. If the results could have implications for your or your family's future, you will receive more information and counselling before you agree to embryos created from your sperm becoming involved.

Offering to take part in a research project is always voluntary. You can change your mind and pull out at any time before embryos created from your sperm are used.

Training of embryologist scientists

Leeds Fertility is part of the Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust and as such, is involved in the training of junior scientists. As part of training in techniques such as sperm and embryo handling, freezing, thawing or injection, it is necessary to use real sperm and embryos. These will only ever be those that are not required for treatment and would be otherwise discarded (e.g. surplus sperm or poorly developed embryos). Your consent will be requested for this, in order to train junior staff, improve our service and develop new techniques.

Useful resources

Donor Conception Network

- www.dcnetwork.org

A UK-based support network for families with donor-conceived children, those considering donor conception and donor-conceived individuals.

National Gamete Donation Trust

- www.ngdt.co.uk

An excellent resource for donors and recipients covering the process in detail and from all aspects.

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, HFEA

- www.hfea.gov.uk

The regulatory body website has lots of information for patients and donors.

Infertility Network UK

- www.infertilitynetworkuk.com

The UK's leading infertility support network offering extensive information and support through treatment. They provide advice regarding funding and a variety of factsheets.

British Fertility Society

- www.britishfertilitysociety.org.uk

The UK professional society promoting high quality practice and research.

British Infertility Counselling Association

- www.bica.net

The professional association of infertility counsellors in the UK.

Contact us

By post

- Leeds Fertility, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Seacroft Hospital, York Road, Leeds, LS14 6UH

By Email

If you would like to start the sperm donation screening process this is the best way to make your enquiry:

- leedsth-tr.spermdonors@nhs.net

Online

- Web: www.leedsfertilityclinic.co.uk

By telephone

Mon-Fri 08.00-17.00

- For all NHS appointments: 0113 206 3100
- For clinical queries: 0113 206 3102
- For genetics queries: 0113 392 4463

Sat-Sun 08.00-12.00

- Clinical queries only: 0113 206 3102

In an Emergency

During working hours

- **Please call appointments or clinical queries as needed on the above numbers**

Outside working hours

Please call Leeds Teaching Hospitals Switchboard on 0113 243 3144 and request to be put through to the Duty Nurse / Dr for Leeds Fertility.

