DONOR SPERM

PATIENT INFORMATION

Are you considering using donor sperm for treatment?
If the answer is yes then please take some time to read through this leaflet. It will give you an overview of treatment options available at the Homerton and guide you through the process of buying sperm.

Who needs to use donor sperm for treatment?
- Same Sex couples
- Single women
- Heterosexual couples with male factor infertility

Legal Implications

Counselling is mandatory to discuss the legal implications of the use of donor sperm. Any child born from donor sperm is the legal child of you and your partner, if you have one. Although the donor is the biological father of the child he will not be the legal parent of the child. The donor has no legal rights or financial responsibility for the child.

Since April 2005, identifying information about donors is held on the HFEA Register and may be given to any child born from a donation once they are 18 years old.

From 6th April 2009 consent to parenthood must be in place prior to treatment commencing with donor sperm or embryos; otherwise any child born will not have a second legal parent. It is possible to use the same donor sperm for a sibling, provided the sperm is available.

In the UK, a donor’s sperm may be used to create up to ten families excluding their own. Your children may share some genetic origins with children in up to ten other families. The same rules do not apply in other countries, so if you are having treatment with donated sperm in another country more children may be genetically related to your child. The sperm donor can withdraw his consent at any time about the use of his donated sperm. This may affect your fertility treatment using the same donor. This would also affect your frozen embryos resulting from the sperm donation.

Funding

For Treatment cycle
If you are having NHS treatment there is no charge for the procedure, scans or medication. NHS funding is dependant on the eligibility of your PCT.; this should be discussed at your initial consultation. For self funding patients please check our price lists in reception

Please be aware the cost of donor sperm is always self funded, even if treatment is NHS funded.
How do I start the process?

1. Referral by GP / other hospital
2. Consultation at the Homerton with a Fertility specialist, where a detailed history will be taken and investigations ordered. Both you and your partner (if you have one) will need to attend.

Investigations may include:

- Blood tests for hormones which indicate ovarian function and reserve.
- Ultrasound scan
- Hyscosy or Hysterosalpingogram these are tests to check if the tubes are patent.
- Screening for sexually transmitted diseases, including Hepatitis and HIV for you and your partner
- Full blood count and rubella

3. You will return for a follow up appointment to receive your investigation results and for a treatment plan to be made. You will be advised at this appointment when to order sperm and have it transferred to the Homerton (ideally you should have seen the counsellor before ordering the sperm)

Types of treatment offered at the Homerton

- **Intrauterine insemination (IUI)**
  This treatment can only be done if the fallopian tubes are open.
  The procedure involves thawing and then preparing your donor sperm. The sample is then placed into the womb close to the time of ovulation via a soft catheter. The treatment may need the use of some fertility medication by the women.

- **IVF**
  This is recommended when the fallopian tubes are blocked or damaged. It may also be recommended when several attempts of IUI have been unsuccessful.
  IVF takes approximately 8 weeks to complete. It involves regular self administered injections to stimulate the ovaries; a minor procedure to collect the eggs. They are then fertilised in the lab with donor sperm. The embryos are then transferred back into the womb in a similar way to insemination.

I want to start treatment, what needs to happen next?

1. Appointment for you and your partner to see the counsellor.

2. Ensure Sperm is purchased and transferred to Homerton fertility Centre.

3. **Last stage before starting treatment** - Nurses appointment to ensure:
   - all consents completed
   - that you understand the treatment process
   - how and when to contact the centre
DONOR SPERM

PATIENT INFORMATION

- that all necessary investigation have been done and are still valid (some need to be repeated; normally annually)
- To check the sperm is stored at the Homerton before you start treatment.
- Answer any queries relating to treatment or funding.

Buying Sperm

Donor sperm may only be procured from donor banks. These have to be purchased on a named person basis and will be stored at the fertility centre; they can only be used exclusively for that person. This sperm is screened and quarantined and ready for use when transferred. Sperm can be bought online after matching for your preferred characteristics. Please do not buy sperm until all the other relevant investigations have been completed and treatment plan finalized. Please check the credentials and license for a sperm bank, especially one outside the UK as this may affect import of the sperm into the UK due to stringent HFEA licensing laws.

Known donors may also be used for treatment (see known donor information sheet)

Screening the sperm Donors

Sperm donors are screened rigorously as per the national guidelines to ensure safety. They are screened at history taking for any medical disorders or family history for a condition which may potentially affect the child. Similarly blood tests are used to screen for STI and genetic abnormalities.

For more information see National Gamete Donation Trust.

When ordering sperm what do I need to know??

It will be very confusing trying to work out what type of sperm to order and how much, below is a basic guide to help

- Only sperm originating from “open donor/ donors agreeing to indentity disclosure” can be purchased for use within the UK. **Do not purchase sperm from an anonymous donor**

- If you order from a recommended bank, one vial or straw will be sufficient for one treatment cycle (very occasionally have we had to use 2)

- You need to know your CMV status (blood test result) before ordering sperm. If you are CMV positive you can choose a donor that is negative or positive. If you are CMV negative we recommend you only buy CMV negative sperm.

- For Insemination cycles you should choose either an IUI washed sperm sample, with a minimum count of 30 million motile sperm per ml or unwashed ICI sample with a minimum of 60 million motile sperm per ml.

- For IVF cycles you can choose a sperm sample with a lower motility and count as we need less sperm for treatment. (these will be cheaper but do not be tempted to use them for insemination cycles as this is a false economy)
DONOR SPERM

PATIENT INFORMATION

- **Washed or unwashed sperm?** If you buy washed sperm you have a guaranteed count in the final thawed sample – if unwashed, we need to prepare the sperm at the Homerton; although we do not charge for this, you may find the count reduces with the final preparation.

- **Dry ice or liquid nitrogen.** You can use either to transport your samples to the Homerton. We recommend liquid nitrogen as the temperature of dry ice is not as low and if there are delays with transportation, there is a potential for the sample to thaw.

Donor banks we use and can recommend

- European Sperm bank based in Denmark [www.europeanspermbank.com](http://www.europeanspermbank.com)
- Xytex international based in the USA [www.xytex.com](http://www.xytex.com)

**Sperm bank costs**

1. Cost of sperm, they can be bought in either straws or vials. There is no difference in samples, some Centres will have a preference for straws others vials, when freezing sperm. Remember sperm costs will vary according to count and motility
2. It is not cost effective to buy one at a time unless you are only having one treatment cycle.
3. The sperm banks will charge a transportation fee (courier fee)
4. Most sperm banks will charge a pregnancy slot. The pregnancy slot is your eligibility to be one of the 10 families that the donor is legally allowed to create. This ensures that the 10 family is not reached whilst you are waiting to start treatment.

Please check on the sperm bank web sites for exact costs of above

**Additional Sperm Charges at Homerton (please see pricing list in reception)**

- We charge a one off set fee when transferring sperm to our centre and an annual storage fee to cover the cost of having the samples in storage at the Homerton. This fee covers one years storage and is charged regardless of the number of samples you have and the length of time they are in storage (i.e. whether stored for 1 month of the year or all 12 months)

If you have any further queries regarding ordering sperm please contact by email on fertility@homerton.nhs.uk