



The Egg Donor – Gestational Surrogacy Program for Single and/or Gay Males at The Fertility Institutes

The technology and methodology for assisting single males or gay male couples in becoming biological parents has made great strides in the past decade. Based in part on innovative legal and medical parenting arrangements facilitated by the experts at The Fertility Institutes, single male and gay parenthood has become an achievable and affordable option for most men interested in beginning or expanding a family.

With offices in Los Angeles, California, Las Vegas, Nevada as well as a planned center in New York City, the Fertility Institutes are one of the world's largest providers of fertility services to the single male and gay communities. In this article, we will detail for you the many aspects involved in successfully becoming a parent utilizing the services of: A) fertility specialists at The Fertility Institutes B) gestational surrogates to carry the pregnancy resulting from the fertilization of the donated eggs with sperm from the male, C) egg donors to provide donated eggs (oocytes) and D) attorneys to prepare the necessary and critical paperwork to assure a safe and happy outcome.

To facilitate your understanding of the arrangements that must take place in order to assure a successful egg donor-surrogacy cycle, we divide the process into tier levels. While each level is as important as the next, such a division helps clarify the process and make it easy to understand how we proceed efficiently through the arrangements that will make your dream of parenthood a reality:

- **TIER I SELECTION OF A FERTILITY CENTER**
 - While various arrangements are made by those seeking egg donors and surrogates at various centers, at The Fertility Institutes, with nearly three decades of experience with arrangements for single male and gay male parents, we have found the most efficient and least stress inducing arrangements are those in which we, at the Center assist you with ALL of the necessary details in arranging your treatment cycle. While nearly all competing centers utilize outside egg donor and surrogacy agencies as well as outside psychologists and attorneys, at The Fertility Institutes, we prefer to keep the

majority of the process internal. While we certainly can work with those that have located their egg donor and or surrogate independently, we have found that by allowing our physicians to become involved in the intense screening process of egg donors and surrogates normally carried out at our center, you are assured a more thorough evaluation and screening than that routinely provided by outside sources. We are very selective in our choice of outside agencies, preferring to work with those that allow the screening process details to be ordered and specified by us. We also serve as patient advocates, that is, your advocates as we are often able to reign in the runaway fees demanded by some agencies and their donors or surrogates.

The early selection of a Center to assist with your plans is crucial to allowing the process that will lead you to parenthood to proceed. As soon as you indicate to us your desire to proceed, we will request that one or two semen specimens be provided. These will be provided by the intended father. Nearly 20% of our gay male couples elect to use sperm from both partners. Such arrangements are entirely possible and can be discussed with the Doctors at any time. These specimens will undergo a complete evaluation and, if suitable, will be frozen and placed into a ***mandatory 6 month sperm quarantine***. It is due to the 6 month quarantine time lag that we encourage men to be decisive in deciding to begin. The sperm quarantine is required by us to remain in compliance with the suggestions and recommendations of various infectious disease and tissue transplantation agencies, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and other reference sources. These procedures are instituted to decrease substantially the possibility of the transmission of infectious agents to recipients (surrogates) or the pregnancy. Because all subsequent treatment arrangements will need to await completion of the quarantine, this is a vital first step in the process. At the time the specimens are obtained, you (the sperm donor) will be asked to undertake infectious disease blood testing that will include HIV (AIDS) testing, Hepatitis B and C, Syphilis, and HTLV I and II testing, You will also be required to be tested for the cystic fibrosis carrier state and perhaps other genetic screening tests depending upon your own personal history. All of this is done to assure the best and safest chances for a healthy pregnancy outcome.

TIER II SELECTION OF A SURROGATE

As the completion of your 6 month sperm quarantine approaches, we will begin your surrogate match process by providing you details of the surrogates that we have available

for match as your date comes due. Approximately 40 to 50 percent of surrogates we interview are willing to carry a pregnancy for single or gay males. You will not have to worry about this, as any and all surrogates that we present to you will have indicated their willingness to carry for gay or single males. Once you express interest in a particular surrogate from the verbal description and details of her history that we present you, we can arrange for you to meet her and perhaps a second alternate surrogate at your convenience. Our surrogate “match” rate with gay and single males is approximately 97%. This means that 97% of the time, once each meets the other, both the surrogate and the father(s) to be agree to work together. If the surrogate you choose has been recruited directly by our program (about 20% of all surrogates), we will put you in contact with the surrogacy attorneys that will begin drafting the contract that will guide us through the conduct of your surrogacy cycle. If the surrogate is from one of our affiliated agencies, we will put you in contact with the agency facilitator who will provide you the details of interfacing with the agency. Once these arrangements have been completed and you indicate to us your happiness with a surrogate match offered you, we will ask the surrogate legal team to begin the preparation of all legal contracts that will allow your treatment to begin.

- **TIER III SELECTION OF AN EGG DONOR**

At the time of your first visit with us, you will be given an opportunity to review the selection of egg donors available at that time. This is done so that you may get a feel for the high quality of the young women available. At this point, it is too early to make an actual selection of a donor, as the donors you will see will be actively available and many will have been selected by others before your 6 month sperm quarantine period has finished. It may also be remembered that at the end of the six month quarantine, some of these same donors may still be available, and many other new donors will also have become qualified for donation.

Approximately four months after you place the sperm into quarantine, you will be asked to contact us so that we may begin the arrangements to match you with your surrogate. With just two months remaining at that time before your sperm becomes completes the six month quarantine and is cleared for use, we will begin the process of arranging the introduction to you of eligible surrogates and at the same time we will present to you the current egg donors available through both our in-house donor program as well as those available from egg donor agencies that meet our rigorous criteria for egg donor eligibility.

We always ask that you provide us the anonymous code designations of at least two egg donors. These codes can be found in the egg donor catalogs you will see. Our first selection match rate is very high but on occasion there may be a scheduling and or availability conflict between the egg donor and the timing requirements of the surrogate or the treatment cycle. This is a rare occurrence but it is wise to have an alternate donor selected even if the chance of the need for an alternate is remote.

Once your surrogate and egg donor are in place, we await only the completion of your surrogacy contract by the legal team and treatment will begin.

- **TIER IV LEGAL WORK AND THE ATTORNEYS**

As noted, once the above described surrogate match is complete, we will then turn the case over to your surrogate attorney(s) who will begin processing the contract on your behalf. Your interface with the attorney may involve a combination of telephone consultations and personal visits. The attorneys will serve as your legal consultants and will advise you concerning the wide range of issues that are involved in the drafting of a surrogacy agreement that will protect the interests of all involved. The attorneys will negotiate with the surrogate concerning those issues that need to be detailed in the agreement. Issues such as the number of embryos to be transferred, multiple birth, the choice of Obstetricians, insurance availability and coverage and birth certificate details will be gone over in detail with you. Providing the attorney with your thoughts, wishes and desires concerning these and many other questions will facilitate the drafting of your contract. Your attorney will consult with your proposed surrogate as well, assuring that her expectations are addressed and dealt with in the wording of your agreement. Once you are satisfied with the contract, it will be presented to your surrogate who will be asked to review the proposal with her own, independent legal counsel. Once all parties are in agreement and the contract is consummated, we can proceed quickly with the arrangements to begin the treatment cycle. Contracts may take from three to seven weeks to draft, depending upon a multitude of factors that may include the state or country of residence of the potential parents, individual preferences concerning details of how the embryos will be handled, insurance and employment issues and more.

- **LOGISTICS AND TRAVEL**

- Well aware of the fact that many of our patients travel to us from distant locations, we try everything in our power to assure that trips made to our office are productive. As the sperm quarantine nears an end, we like you to return to the office and in one trip: meet the surrogate candidate(s), provide you the selection of egg donors, and allow you to meet with the surrogacy attorney(s).

Once all of this has been accomplished, we await the completion of the surrogacy agreement by your attorney. Remember that we start this process about two months in advance of the sperm quarantine completion, so that by the time the sperm becomes available, all of the subjects to be involved are in place and all of the paperwork may be complete or near completion. A final check is carried out to assure that all FDA required infectious disease screening is complete, all paperwork is in order and all participants have been provided all of the information regarding the services about to be carried out. Informed consent is obtained from all parties, and the treatment course begins.

- **SUMMARY**

- This document has offered a brief summary of how our program for the provision of fertility services to single and/or gay male couples is carried out.
- Very unique in our program is the near total absence of third party vendors, agencies, “facilitators” and managers. We have found over the years that fertility programs that provide egg donors and surrogates tend to become extremely burdened by an overabundance of such third party “assistants”, much to the financial detriment of their patients. The simple facts related to egg donor and surrogate arrangements are that there are two legal contacts involved: A contract between the future parent(s) and the surrogate and a separate contract between the parent(s) and the anonymous donor. Other than this, there are NO additional “arrangements” or “requirements” specified in California law. The often extraordinary fees charged by “agencies” for nondescript services can often exceed the total costs for all medical care, and in many cases we are able to provide savings of nearly \$40,000 when compared to other programs. Future fathers are urged, when considering the choice of a fertility program, to assure themselves that 100% of the costs of a given program relate to mandatory and necessary medical fees, legal fees, surrogate compensation and egg donor compensation. Agency fees should be described in advance and,

if an agency is used to secure an egg donor and/or a surrogate, there should be no “add on” fees such as “processing fees”, “center fees” or any other charges that very well may represent financial “fluff”. Many of our clients ask how our fees can be so far below competing programs. The answer lies in who we are and how we operate. We are a state and federally licensed and insured medical practice. We charge for the medical care that we provide. Period. In contrast, there is NO current requirement that egg donor agencies or surrogate agencies obtain ANY type of licensure other than a simple business license. There is, therefore no oversight of fees, what those fees are charged for or what those fees represent. There is no oversight of the egg donors or surrogates that they represent as “qualified”. They must build into their fee structures the fact that as many as 80% of the women solicited by them for participation as an egg donor or surrogate may ultimately be found to be unsuited once they undergo medical screening.

- We hope that we have provided you some valuable insights into the unique and exciting process of pursuing a child with the assistance of egg donors and surrogate mothers. Please feel free to discuss openly with us any and all questions that you may have about the process. At the Fertility Institutes, our lives revolve around assisting you achieve your goal of a family. In addition to the procedures we have described here, we offer additional innovative fertility treatments that may be added onto or blended into the egg donor-surrogate combination. We are the world’s largest provider of 100% sex selection services. This process lends itself easily to the procedures involved in egg donor and surrogate pregnancy arrangements. We offer many similar exciting options and again encourage you to share your thoughts and ideas with us.
- If you are interested in hearing more about our program or in beginning the process with us, please feel free to call us at 818-728-4600 or toll free in the U.S.A. at 800-222-2802. We look forward to working together with you to achieve what is clearly the finest of dreams!

