



Golden Egg Donation

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Dear Future Egg Donor!

Thank you for your decision to become an egg donor. It takes a special kind of woman to be willing and able to share the gift of fertility with an infertile woman. Helping others to achieve their dream of having a child can be a deeply gratifying and even life-altering experience.

Before you begin your journey, there are a few pieces of information we want to give you to help you fully understand what will be involved and possibly answer any initial questions you may have.

First: *Is Egg Donation For You?*

The first big question is whether or not egg donation is right for you. Women decide to donate for a number of reasons, with the best reason being the desire to help a couple have a baby.

However, when your first exposure to egg donation is through an egg donor wanted ad, there may be a tendency -- at least at first -- to focus on the monetary compensation.

The money received for egg donation is given in exchange for all the time and effort you go through when donating your eggs, and there's a good reason for that. Egg donation involves a lot of time and effort!

If you're considering becoming an egg donor, you should first make sure you understand what is involved. Egg donation is a wonderful gift to a couple that cannot have a baby without your help. It's an opportunity not only to help bring a new life into this world, but also to help create a new family. The financial compensation is nice, too.

Still, becoming an egg donor is not for everyone. It takes a lot of time and effort, and requires you to feel comfortable submitting to many medical procedures.

This list is by no means comprehensive, but it'll help you understand generally ***what's involved*** in becoming an egg donor.

All egg donors:

Must have a full physical exam, including a pelvic examination (similar to your annual gynecological exam.) The pelvic exam will include testing for gonorrhea and chlamydia.

Must have transvaginal ultrasounds. During the screening process, ultrasound is used to evaluate your fertility potential and the health of your ovaries. During the donation cycle itself, ultrasound is used to monitor the stimulation of your ovaries.

Must have blood work. During screening, blood work is required to check for a variety of diseases and do genetic testing. During the donation cycle, you'll need to have blood drawn almost daily for up to 10 days, to monitor the egg stimulation.

May have genetic testing. The purpose of genetic testing is to screen for genetic disorders such as cystic fibrosis or Tay Sachs. Egg donors also need to provide a detailed family history, to help detect inherited diseases.

Must get tested for STDs and AIDS. You will also be tested for other communicable disease testing, including hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and syphilis.

Go through psychological screening. The purpose is mainly to make sure you understand the donor process and the risks involved, and to help you think through the emotional and ethical aspects of donation. Psychological testing may be done to make sure the donation would not be harmful to you psychologically, and to help prevent passing on certain inheritable mental illness. Some agencies also ask for IQ and personality testing.

Must agree to testing and psychological screening for your partner. If you're married, it is required. If not, it may or may not be required of your partner, but it is highly recommended. Your partner will be tested for STDs and AIDS, and the psychological screening is to ensure that he understands the egg donation process and accepts your participation.

May have an unannounced drug screening. Drug use puts you at high risk for sexual transmitted diseases and may affect your fertility health. Also, if you say you've never done drugs, but drug testing is positive, it suggests that you may not have been honest with other parts of the screening process.

Must have access to detailed family and personal health histories. This includes sharing physical and mental health information of your biological parents, grandparents, and siblings. You also will need to be honest about any former drug use or risky sexual behavior (like prostitution.)

Be able to give yourself frequent self-injections. The fertility medications you'll be taking are injectable medications, which you will have to give to yourself, usually into the fatty tissue of your stomach. The daily injections last about 3 ½ weeks, and you may be giving yourself a few injections of different medications a day.

Must be available for frequent appointments for blood work and for ultrasounds, usually very early in the morning before 10 am. Egg stimulation is time sensitive, and your schedule needs to be flexible enough to account for the testing and procedures.

Go through egg retrieval, which is a minor surgical procedure where an ultrasound guided needle is placed through your vaginal wall, to aspirate the developed eggs from the ovaries. You'll receive IV sedation for the procedure, and you will probably want to take the day off from work. Many women feel fine the next day, while others need to rest longer.

May experience drug and medical procedure side effects. The fertility drugs and egg retrieval may cause side effects. Most side effects are merely uncomfortable, including things like headaches and bloating, while some of the rare side effects can lead to hospitalization. In very rare cases of severe side effects (less than 1%), failure to treat complications can be life threatening and may lead to the loss of your future fertility.

Need to make a several month commitment. From the time you answer the ad, get through the screening process, get chosen by intended parents, and go through the donor cycle, several months may pass by. During actual donation, you will be involved with the injections, blood tests, doctor appointments, and transvaginal ultrasounds on an almost daily basis for two to four weeks.

May need to abstain from sex during the donor cycle. During donation, you are extremely fertile, and while the eggs should not release on their own, they may. The doctor may also miss a few eggs during the retrieval. If you're having sex, this may lead to a multiple pregnancy of twins, triplets or even more. You may also need to refrain from sex due to discomfort from the fertility drugs or when healing from the egg retrieval.

Have a high responsibility to carry out medical instructions exactly. Your responsibilities include not just taking medications, but doing them at the precise time instructed. If the doctor asked you to give yourself an injection of a particular drug at 8 PM on a particular night, you must do just that, or it could jeopardize the entire donation.

Need to understand that they are relinquishing any parental rights to the child born from the donated eggs. This also means that if you have children in the future, you understand that they may have half-siblings in the world that they may never meet or know. (It is possible to have a partial open donation if the intended parents are interested, where you can maintain some contact between the intended parents and yourself. But this isn't common.)

Need to understand that once you donate your eggs, you have no rights over them. Once the eggs are fertilized and become embryos, they may not all be used right away to make a baby. Some may be left over, and whether they remain frozen for the future, donated to another couple, donated for research, or destroyed is up to the intended parents. Sometimes, intended parents will make a prior agreement on what they will do with leftover embryos with a donor, but legally, it's probably not enforceable. (You can't make the couple have another child, in other words.)

Need to understand that a baby is not guaranteed. IVF is not a perfect technology, and while the intended parents have a good chance for conceiving, it's also possible no baby will result. You may or may not be given this information, depending on your contract and agreements.

As you can see, egg donors have high responsibilities. If you think you can do this, then good for you! Your donation, if you pass through the screening phase, is the greatest gift you could ever give to another person.

But if after looking at this list, you feel egg donation is not for you, there's nothing wrong with that. What's most important is that you seriously considered the idea and took into account your life and feelings. Better to decide not to donate now, rather than going through the screening process only to let down a family who has their heart set on your donor file.

The next thing you should know about is the ***possible risks associated with becoming an egg donor***. Though egg retrieval is always performed under ultrasound guidance, there is always a slight risk that a needle may puncture the surrounding tissue or organs, causing injury, bleeding, and/or infection. Few women treated with fertility drugs (0.55 to 2%) have a risk of ovarian hyper stimulation syndrome. This problem may occur slowly or very suddenly and, in severe cases, the ovaries become enlarged and cause pain, fluid may collect in the abdomen and lungs, or bleeding in the abdomen from the rupture of follicle cysts. In severe cases this might require hospital treatment. You may experience some discomfort similar to menstrual cramps directly after the procedure of egg retrieval, but these should dissipate within hours of the procedure. You may also experience light spotting, but you should not have heavy bleeding and you should call us immediately if you begin to bleed heavily or have acute abdominal pain, as this would be highly unusual. Most egg donors go through the process with no side effects; some, however, may feel bloating, pelvic discomfort, or moodiness. Allergic reactions such as rash, fever, itching, difficulty in breathing (asthma) and shock are possible side effects but they are quite rare.

Medications you will either be taking or will need to be knowledgeable about:

Lupron (One injection per day for approximately 12 days, then one injection per day in conjunction with gonadotropin therapy (see below) for a total of approximately 22 days)

The administration of Lupron is used to prevent release of eggs and to control some of the female hormone levels. Specifically, it affects the pituitary gland and results in lower luteinizing hormone (LH) and follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) in the body. This approach is used to achieve a more uniform and predictable response to the IVF medicines and reduce the likelihood of an egg donation cycle being canceled.

Ganirelix acetate or Cetrotide (One injection per day or every 3 days taken with gonadotropin therapy. Usually it is added after being on the gonadotropin therapy for 4-5 days. It is taken for approximately 5-6 days)

This may be used *instead* of Lupron to prevent the eggs from ovulating during the stimulation and also allows for more control of the cycle. It is a newer medicine and is not given for as many days as the Lupron.

Follicle Stimulating Hormones (FSH - Gonal F, Bravelle, Follistim, Memopur, Repronex) (One injection per day for approximately 10 days)

FSH is the very same hormone produced by a woman's body to mature the eggs within the ovaries during her reproductive cycle. Each egg in the ovary sits in a sac called a follicle. In the treatment of egg donation, FSH medicine is given to develop many sacs or follicles and thus make many eggs. The more ovarian follicles produced, the greater chances are for a successful outcome.

Human Chorionic Gonadotropin (HCG or "Trigger shot" - Ovidrel, Profasi, Pregnyl) (One injection approximately 34 hours prior to egg retrieval)

HCG is the name of the pregnancy hormone and is produced by the human placenta. The purpose of administering HCG is to mature the eggs before they are retrieved, like when the sun ripens a fruit. Once the follicles are the right size, then the egg inside needs to ripen or become mature so HCG medicine makes this happen. It is very important to take this because without it, the eggs would not be usable for IVF.

Finally, here are the answers to some **Frequently Asked Questions** when starting the egg donation process:

Can I donate if I just had a baby?

You may not donate while you are breastfeeding. It is also necessary for you to have at least three regular menstrual cycles prior to participating in an egg donation cycle.

Can I donate if I've had a tubal ligation?

Yes, you may be an egg donor if you have had a tubal ligation. Your eggs will be retrieved prior to being released in the fallopian tubes.

Will donating eggs now affect my fertility or the ability to have children in the future?

No. All currently available information shows that there is no decrease in a donor's ability to get pregnant after completing a normal retrieval.

What are my responsibilities to the children that may be born from this process?

You are not responsible to any children born from this process. The Intended Parents assume all responsibility.

Do I have to have health insurance?

No. The Intended Parents are responsible for your medical costs and for supplementary insurance should any complications arise which are directly related to the egg retrieval process.

How much time will I have to take off from work or school?

It depends on several factors. The largest is the way your body responds to stimulations. In most cases you will only have to take a day off for the actual egg retrieval. Initial screening usually takes half a day, and other monitoring sessions usually take less than an hour in the morning. If your cycle is traveling, you may be required to take 3 to 10 days off and stay close to the fertility facility for the egg retrieval. The recipient covers travel expenses. We should be able to tell you how long it will be once our fertility doctor meets with you for the initial screening. You will also have to travel 1 day for initial screening. Monitoring is done in a different facility closer to the donor to make the process easier.

How long will it take to be matched?

This is not something we can predict. Some donors have been matched within one week of applying; others have taken as long as one year and some may never be matched.

How old do I have to be to donate my eggs?

We require our egg donors to be between the ages of 18 to 30 years of age, though exceptions are occasionally made for women between ages 31 and 34, especially if they have proven fertility (have had children or successfully donated before).

Will I be more or less fertile after egg donation?

You will be more fertile in the month following egg donation. After one month, you will return to your normal fertility status.

How does egg donation affect my fertility in the future?

Egg donation does not appear to have any long-term effects on your fertility.

How long does the egg donation process take?

The egg donation process from treatment start to retrieval takes approximately one month. The egg retrieval itself takes minutes.

What is involved with taking infertility medication?

The medications you will need to take are injectable. You will be required to give yourself injections one time per day for the first two weeks of the egg donation process and two times per day for the second two weeks. Our nurses will teach you how to self-inject safely and are available 24 hours a day to answer any questions.

Will I be put under general anesthesia for egg retrieval?

Intravenous (IV) sedation is administered by a nurse anesthetologist. Occasionally, you may experience the following short-term side effects: nausea, vomiting and sleepiness. Therefore, we instruct you to rest for 24 hours after egg donation. You are also required to be picked up by somebody after the egg donation and mustn't drive for 24 hours.

How long will I have to be away from work or school after the egg retrieval?

We recommend modified bed rest at home for 24 hours after egg donation.

How long will it take for my body to return to normal after egg retrieval?

You should anticipate a menstrual period within 10 days after you donate. Following the next menstrual cycle, your body should be back to normal.

We realize this is a lot of information but take your time in reading everything so you can make the best possible decision for yourself. If you have any further questions please call 323-512-3939 or email us at info@goldeneggdonation.com.

Best Regards,

Alexis Fuller, Director (Golden Egg Donation, Inc.)