

Fairfax Cryobank

The Trusted Choice for Donor Sperm

Donor Insemination

Top 10 Things You Need to Know

*Possibilities
Realized*

Fairfax
Cryobank

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Donor Insemination (DI) is widely used worldwide to help people realize their dream of having a family. Single women and same-sex couples use DI to conceive and build their families. For couples experiencing male infertility, DI can be a natural early step in the assisted reproductive process. Or, if a male partner is a known carrier of an inherited genetic condition, using donor sperm significantly reduces the chance of passing on that condition.

There are many exciting options to consider when pursuing Donor Insemination. To help you prepare for this important step toward building the family you desire, here are some basics to get you started:

Answers to the top 10 questions asked by people just like you

1 What is my chance of success with Donor Insemination?

Donor Insemination (DI) is practiced throughout the world with an estimated 10,000 births a year in the United States alone. The monthly chance of pregnancy ranges from 8% to 15%, but ultimate pregnancy rates are high, with up to 80% of individuals who choose DI eventually having a child.

2 How is Donor Insemination performed?

DI is a simple procedure that uses a syringe to place sperm into a woman's vagina or uterus to assist her in becoming pregnant. The sperm is obtained from someone other than a woman's husband or partner. Sperm banks offer a selection of screened and tested sperm donors for those interested in using DI. Your physician will discuss which DI procedure is right for you.

There are basically two types of insemination options: intrauterine or intracervical:

Intrauterine Insemination: Using a small catheter, semen is inserted directly into the uterus by way of the cervical opening. The sperm specimen is labeled as IUI (intrauterine) and is pre-washed, meaning that seminal plasma is removed prior to freezing.

Intracervical Insemination: Semen is placed into the cervical opening. Sperm is typically labeled as ICI (intracervical or standard) and is unwashed, i.e. the seminal plasma has not been removed.

3 Why choose Donor Insemination over other options to build my family?

There are several advantages to using DI over other methods:

- Donor selection can be made with the participation of your spouse, partner, or family and friends.
- The woman can experience pregnancy and all the excitement, anticipation, and bonding derived from carrying and delivering her child.
- As the biological mother, you will know that your child is produced from your own eggs and your own genetic material.
- By attending the inseminations, your partner can share in the child's conception.

- DI is a relatively simple and usually painless procedure, performed in your physician's office, that requires no surgery or hospital stay.
- The use of donor sperm to achieve pregnancy generally has become very well accepted. Most receive support from their family and friends when they choose to disclose that they have used DI to have a child.
- The treatment is confidential; you decide who knows that you are using donor sperm. The contract the sperm donor has with their sperm bank should ensure against any legal, material, or emotional claim by the donor on you or your child. Donors have given up any parental rights as part of their agreement with the sperm bank.
- The donor selection process offers choices that match physical, personal, and ethnic traits of a partner, if desired.
- Extensive review of a donor's medical history and testing for infectious and common genetic diseases add a level of safety to the process. Updated medical information on the donor is available from sperm banks.
- In general, DI is less costly than other options, e.g., adoption or IVF (in vitro fertilization).

4 Should I choose a Non-ID or Identity (ID) donor?

Sperm banks offer Non-ID and ID Option sperm donors so as to provide a pool of donors that appeal to potential recipients. Non-ID donors provide detailed non-identifying information for their medical and personal profiles, for supplemental products that you can use to choose a donor, and undergo rigorous testing and screening. ID Option donors provide the same non-identifying, detailed level of information, testing and screening, but they agree to allow the sperm banks to release identifying information, upon request, to your child once they reach 18. Not all sperm banks define ID donors in the same way. At some sperm banks, donors have agreed to disclose their contact information to offspring when their offspring reach the age of 18. At others, they may mediate contact while allowing the donor to remain anonymous or allow the donor to opt out entirely.

5 What are the steps I need to follow if I am ready to move forward?

Choosing the ideal sperm donor from a sperm bank typically takes some time as you review all your options. Your physician may have some recommended sperm banks for

you to consider. Sperm banks are often called "cryobanks" because they store frozen (cryopreserved) specimens.

Donor lists at the largest sperm banks are online and allow you to sort them based on your preferences. Many also provide personalized services that make the selection process easier. Donors provide detailed family and personal medical histories for your review. They undergo extensive screening, including thorough medical examinations and testing for genetic diseases and sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV. The FDA regulates the donor screening process, and all sperm banks must comply and pass regular inspections. Testing standards among sperm banks differ, as some do more than the FDA requires, so you may want to investigate this before choosing a sperm bank.

For the donors who make it through the screening process, extensive donor information is available online. Not only can you select a donor based on physical characteristics and ethnic background, you may be able to listen to audio interviews, look at childhood and adult photographs, match the donor to photos of loved ones, read personality profiles and essays, and learn a sperm bank's staff impressions of the donor. Personal profiles include education, talents, and many other unique aspects of the donor. Medical histories review health issues for the donor and his extended family.

6 How do I choose a sperm bank?

Selecting a sperm bank can be as critical as choosing a donor. Consider the following in making your decision:

- Reputation and longevity
- Extent of donor screening and genetic and infectious disease testing
- Scope of donor information, e.g., childhood photos, audio interviews, personal and medical profiles, staff impressions, adult photos, etc.
- Sperm quality standard or warranty, i.e., minimum acceptable standards for each sperm specimen, usually expressed as total motile cells (TMC)
- Vial buy-back policy and storage services. Some sperm banks will buy back any unused vials at 50% of the purchase price, as long as such vials have not left the sperm bank.
- Price. Remember: you are choosing the biological father of your children; don't pick a donor only because he's attractively priced. Make sure HE is attractive to you!
- Physician recommendation

7 What if I want a full biological sibling for my child?

Consider storing some additional units for a full sibling. It could be several years between pregnancies, and a specific donor's supply often runs out. Sperm banks usually will buy back, at some reduced rate, the units that you don't use, i.e., vial buy-back policy.

8 Are the number of births limited for each sperm donor?

Many sperm banks limit donor distribution by the number of reported births or families. In addition, reported births within geographic regions also can be limited, using the American Society of Reproductive Medicine guideline of no more than 25 births per 800,000 population. Reporting a birth to the sperm bank you used is critical for keeping track of the number of children from your donor.

9 Should I tell my donor conceived child about his/her origins?

This is a very personal matter, and there is no one right answer for everyone. Mental health professionals do recommend that families disclose this information. Increasingly more literature, both lay and medical, is being published to assist families as they contemplate how best to address this issue with their son or daughter. There are also online resources, chat rooms, forums, and support groups that may be helpful.

If a family does choose to disclose, you may find it helpful to be in contact with other like-minded individuals who used DI or a group of parents who used the same donor. As a child matures and becomes curious about his/her origins, they might gain important emotional support and biological connections by communicating with half siblings. There are online sites that cater to making these contacts and allow individuals to do so without revealing their identity. Several sperm banks offer forums as well to facilitate these connections. The advantage of using a forum from a sperm bank is that it can verify that only those that used the donor are actually in the private donor forums, and some will post medical updates there as well. For those who are ready to meet face-to-face, these sites also offer the opportunity to plan meetings with each other. These online communities may not be for everyone, but it is important to know they exist.

10 What if there are medical problems that are reported in a donor's offspring or by the donor himself? How will I know?

The risk of a birth defect when conceiving with DI is no different than when conceiving naturally, and it ranges from 2% to 4%. The screening and testing of donors is to ensure that these risks and those of disease transmission are managed as well as reasonably possible. Therefore, sperm banks take the reporting of any medical problems by offspring or the donor very seriously.

You also can check with the sperm bank to see if there has been a medical update that might affect your child or future plans for more children. Some offer this as an online service you can check anytime. For those who choose to store sperm at locations other than the originating sperm bank, it is particularly important to check the donor's status prior to an insemination.

Want to know more?

Don't hesitate to talk to your physician or nurse. Or, call Fairfax Cryobank at 800-338-8407. We would be happy to answer your questions and help you confidently create the family you desire. Keep in mind that the internet is a rich source of information.

