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.

What is my chance of success with Donor Insemination?

FaceMatch™ is Fairfax Cryobank’s exclusive free online service where you upload a photo and we show the donors that most resemble that photo. Used nearly 100,000 times since its inception, it is one of the most popular services offered.

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 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.

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.

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
Sperm Banks offer Anonymous and ID Option sperm donors so as to provide a pool of donors that appeal to potential recipients. Anonymous 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 21. At others, they may mediate contact while allowing the donor to remain anonymous or allow the donor to opt out entirely.

**Should I choose an Anonymous or Identity (ID) donor?**

Options vary among laboratories, but the first step is to determine what kind of information you want to provide to a recipient. If you prefer complete anonymity, consider an anonymous donor. If you are open to having your recipient learn more about you, perhaps through a letter or through a website, consider a non-identifying donor.

**How do I choose a sperm bank?**

No two sperm banks are alike. Here are some questions that you should consider:

**1.** Is my sperm bank located in a state where sperm banks are regulated? Approved sperm banks must comply with state laws and regulations. Sperm banks that do not comply with these laws and regulations may not be able to provide sperm to their recipients.

**2.** Does my sperm bank meet the requirements of the FDA? The FDA regulates the donor screening, testing, and selection process for sperm banks. Sperm banks must comply with FDA regulations in order to provide sperm to their recipients.

**3.** What is the success rate of the sperm bank? The success rate of a sperm bank can be influenced by a variety of factors, including the quality of the sperm donors, the laboratory procedures used, and the recipient's age and health.

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

- Choose the sperm bank that is right for you.

- Contact the sperm bank to schedule an appointment to meet with a counselor.

- Meet with the counselor to discuss your options and learn more about the sperm bank.

- Complete the necessary paperwork to begin the process.

**6.** How do I choose a sperm bank?

- Consider the following in making your decision:
  - Reputability 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.

**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 for Reproductive Medicine guidelines of no more than 20 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 discuss 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 forum, 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.