

Donating Sperm

Thank you for taking the time to consider donating sperm.

Why is Donor Sperm Needed?

There are several reasons why a woman or couple may need to use donor sperm:

- a man's testes may never have produced sperm because of a genetic condition
- surgery or drugs to treat cancer may have left a man infertile
- a man may produce sperm, but too few to create a pregnancy
- a woman is single or in a single-sex relationship

Who Can Have Treatment with Donor Sperm?

MFS operates a non-discriminatory policy about access to services, investigations and treatments. The clinic provides fertility treatment for couples, single and lesbian women.

The welfare of any potential child created as a result of treatment at MFS is always taken into careful consideration before any agreement to treat a patient, whether they are single, lesbian or in a heterosexual relationship.

Occasionally MFS may need to use donor sperm in a research project or for teaching purposes, but only with a donor's consent.

If a donor is unhappy about any of the potential uses of his donor sperm, he may specify which treatments he would be happy for his sperm to be used and discuss this in more depth with someone from one of the MFS clinical or scientific teams.

Who Can Become a Sperm Donor?

Donors need to be aged 18 - 45 and be fit and healthy with no family history of serious illness.

The first stage of becoming a donor involves a few questions about the donor and his family history, which can be asked over the telephone. A more detailed interview will take place at the initial consultation, when an MFS doctor will discuss the donation process in more depth and take a detailed family medical history.

Donating sperm may have implications for the donor and his partner in the future so MFS needs to ensure that he is happy with the issues surrounding sperm donation and to explain the legal implications.

All potential donors and their partners are offered independent counselling. This is a good opportunity to discuss any concerns about sperm donation, including the implications of the various tests and the possible impact on the man in the case of an unusual or unexpected result.

How are Donors Tested?

A sample of blood will be taken for analysis to determine the donor's blood group, and to screen for any infections such as HIV, Hepatitis B & C and genetic abnormalities. Following this the donor will be asked to attend the clinic to produce a sperm sample for analysis and a test freeze.

The majority of potential sperm donors are declined because their sperm does not freeze well and not usually because there is anything wrong with the sample itself. However, any problems with the sample itself will be explained fully to the donor and any future implications may be discussed.

Sperm is stored at MFS by freezing it in 'banks' of liquid nitrogen to preserve it until it is needed for treatment, when it will be thawed.

What Happens after Successful Screening?

Once the screening is completed successfully, the donor will be able to start donating. He will need to be able to attend the clinic each week over about six months to donate.

To ensure donated sperm is of optimal quality donors are asked to abstain from any sexual activity for two days before donation. The sample **must** be produced by masturbation at the clinic into a sterile container provided. A private room is available for this.

Once the donor has provided enough sperm for storage he will be asked to attend the clinic to have some blood taken to ensure he is still clear of HIV, Hepatitis B & C and sexually transmitted infections. This must be done before MFS is able to release the sperm from quarantine and use it for treatment.

Will the Donor be Identified?

The identity of any donor who donated sperm before 31 March 2005 is known only to MFS and the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) and will not be passed on to the recipients of the sperm and any resulting children.

On 1 April 2005 the law changed and any child born as a result of sperm donated after this date will be able to access the identity of the donor when they reach the age of 18. However, this is dependent on the child being aware that they were conceived with donor sperm and actively tracing their biological father via the HFEA. The earliest 18 year olds will be able to do this will be in 2023.

The recipient of donor sperm will continue to have access only to non-identifying information about the donor - usually hair colour and eye colour - unless the child chooses to share information about the identity of the donor with the recipient parent/s after they reach the age of 18.

Who is the Legal Parent of any Resulting Child?

The recipient or couple who receive the donor sperm will be the legal parents, although the donor will be the genetic parent, of any child born. The donor has no legal or financial obligation to any resulting child unless he deliberately fails to disclose information which results in him passing on a disease.

Do Donors Get Paid?

The HFEA does not allow payment to be made to sperm donors. However, MFS is allowed to reimburse donors for expenses incurred, and wholly connected to, donating sperm at MFS.

Next Steps

To assess the potential to become a donor complete the sperm donor checklist on www.midlandfertility.com, or contact MFS with any further questions, or to book a consultation to become a sperm donor.

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