

Thank you for taking the time to consider donating sperm.

Why is donor sperm needed?

A woman or couple may need to use donor sperm for one of several reasons:

- 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 concerned about any of the potential uses of his donor sperm, he may specify for 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 thorough 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.

Giving consent

A sperm donor will be required to complete a consent form which will detail how his samples are to be used. He will need to:

- specify how his sperm can be used in treatment, whether embryos can be created *in vitro* and whether the sperm or embryos can be used for training and research
- consent to sperm and embryos being frozen and stored, specifying a storage period up to the legal limit of 10 years unless there are circumstances which allow for this to be extended to a maximum of 55 years
- specify how many families may have children using his sperm up to a maximum of 10 families.

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 and 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 and 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 recipient and donor know each other's identities?

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, unless the donor re-registered with the HFEA to be identifiable under current legislation.

In 2005 the law regarding donor anonymity changed so that any person, donor-conceived after 1 April 2005:

- when they reach 16 years old, is able to apply to the HFEA to receive the non-identifying information that the donor provided (that is, all information given by the donor except for their name and last-known address)
- when they reach 18 years old, is able to apply to the HFEA to find the information the donor provided, including identifying information

However, this is dependent on the person being aware that they were donor-conceived and actively tracing their biological father via the HFEA.

The recipient of donor sperm will continue to have access only to non-identifying information about the donor - such as characteristics and hobbies - 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.

Donors who donated after 1 August 1991 are entitled to request information from the HFEA about the number, sex and year of birth of any people born as a result of his donation.

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?

MFS is allowed to reimburse donors for expenses incurred and wholly connected to donating sperm at MFS. From April 2012, the HFEA allows sperm donors to be paid a fixed sum of £35 per visit.

Further information

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