



**Boston IVF**

# **Oocyte Donor Handbook**

**Boston IVF**

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## **Introduction**

Welcome to the egg donor program at Boston IVF. This booklet contains information that will help you understand the program and the steps required at each stage of the process. We encourage you to read this booklet carefully and ask our egg donor coordinator to clarify any points that you find confusing. We thank you for your participation and look forward to working with you.

## **Who can be an Egg Donor?**

An egg donor is a compassionate woman who offers another woman the chance to become a mother. Any woman in good health, between the ages of 21 and up to her 36<sup>th</sup> birthday, may volunteer to donate her eggs. Egg donors must also be responsible and dependable.

## **Who Needs Egg Donor IVF?**

Egg donor IVF was originally designed for women who no longer had any eggs of their own. Typically, these women had experienced menopause, often prematurely, as the result of autoimmune disease, chemotherapy, radiation therapy or surgical removal of the ovaries. While the original indication for egg donor IVF still stands, the success of the technique led to an expanded list of indications. Egg donor IVF is also offered to women who carry significant genetic diseases that they do not want to pass on to their children, and women whose chance of conception with standard therapy is very low, or zero.

## **An Overview of Egg Donation**

Egg donors first undergo several straightforward medical and psychological screening tests. When these have been successfully completed, the egg donor takes fertility medications to help more eggs mature than would normally be in a menstrual cycle. She then has a 20 minute, minor surgical procedure under anesthesia, to retrieve those eggs.

## **Financial Obligations of an egg donor**

Egg donors are not expected to pay for the medical and psychological screening tests, medications or procedures that occur leading up to, or during, the donation cycle. Donors who do not have a personal relationship with the recipient receive financial compensation for the time and energy they put into donating their eggs.

## **Becoming an Egg Donor**

There are a number of steps in the process of becoming an egg donor. This section of the handbook describes each step along the way. This process applies to both known and unknown donors.

## **The Role of the Agency/ Facilitator**

Many women who wish to become an egg donor make their first contact with an Egg Donation Agency or Facilitator. The Agency or Facilitator enables a recipient woman to select a potential egg donor. The Agency should provide a potential egg donor with a general understanding of the entire egg donation process, including medical screening, procedures prior to being accepted as an egg donor, the administration of medications, monitoring of the ovaries, and the minor surgical procedure involved. The Agency helps the donor understand the responsibilities she takes on during her treatment, and helps her to set her expectations, so she can anticipate every step in the process. Boston IVF will only work with those agencies that follow ASRM guidelines.

## **Setting Expectations**

Egg donation has been practiced in the United States for nearly twenty years, and the procedure has a long safety record. Many women have satisfied their desire to help others by becoming egg donors. However, being an egg donor requires more than a desire to help others, it requires a time commitment, to complete screening, and go through an IVF cycle.

As an egg donor, you will be asked to travel to Boston IVF for testing and treatment. Usually, the time sensitive tests are limited to just a few days during the process, but they are critical.

The egg retrieval, to gather the eggs, is a minor surgical procedure done at Boston IVF's Waltham Center. All egg donors are required to have a responsible adult accompany them on the day of retrieval. This is critical to your safety. If you do not have anyone available to accompany you to and from the procedure, you must inform your agency and Boston IVF's donor egg coordinator, so that alternate arrangements can be made for you by your agency.

Some egg donors travel long distances to donate their eggs. If you are a donor from out of town you will be required to be at Boston IVF on Cycle Day 7 of your stimulated medications and stay until the retrieval, usually 6 or 7 days later. Boston IVF will be in contact with you, and your agency, to plan for your travel arrangements. Also, do not plan on returning home the day of the procedure if the trip requires a long drive, air, or train travel. Your agency will find local

accommodations for you and inform you where you will be staying before the cycle begins.

## **Pre-Cycle Testing**

There are a number of steps required of the donor before the procedure can take place. All of the tests and consultations have been designed to ensure your health. The donor egg team will be in contact with you to arrange these tests.

### **The Medical Questionnaire**

The purpose of the medical questionnaire is to determine if it is safe for the would-be donor to donate eggs. In addition, the questionnaire asks questions that help describe the donor as a person. For instance, her likes and dislikes, her passions, her education and goals. The questionnaire enables the recipient to know who the donor is as a person, without knowing her identity.

### **The Personal Interview**

After we have reviewed the Medical Questionnaire each egg donor will be contacted to let them know if they have been accepted. She will then be able to set up her appointments for all of her testing at Boston IVF. The egg donor has the opportunity to ask questions and determine if she is ready to take on the responsibilities of being an egg donor by meeting with the nurse, as well as learn about the medications that you will use during the treatment cycle and how to administer them.

### **Psychological Questionnaire**

At the end of the personal interview the donor is asked to complete a written test called the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI). The MMPI was developed many years ago and is a widely accepted screening tool.

### **The Social Work Interview**

We require all potential egg donors to see a Boston IVF approved social worker, or psychologist. This is part of our strategy to ensure your long term psychological health. The interview will focus on the many complex moral, ethical, and psychosocial issues that confront egg donors. Our experienced social workers will help you explore many issues so you will feel confident in your choice to donate eggs. Known donors will have a private, and a joint meeting, with the recipient couple and a social worker.

## The Medical Examination

The final step in the screening process is the medical examination. During this examination you will meet with a Boston IVF nurse practitioner for a physical exam, have blood drawn, and other screening tests performed. In some cases we will accept documentation of certain tests that have been performed elsewhere. Once the screening process is complete, you will be informed whether you are eligible to become an egg donor.

## Consent Forms and Legal Issues

All donors are required to sign a Boston IVF consent form that is witnessed and to have a legal contract with the recipient couple.

## Pre-Cycle Recommendations

At Boston IVF, we have two goals for your egg donation cycle. The first goal is to help you donate eggs safely, and with a minimum of discomfort. The second goal is to help an infertile woman achieve an uncomplicated pregnancy that results in the delivery of a health baby. There are certain things you can do to help us achieve these goals.

### **Sexual Relations**

During the month that you are donating eggs, we ask you to refrain from having sexual intercourse. This will reduce your personal risk of becoming pregnant unintentionally during the treatment cycle.

### **Smoking**

The detrimental effects of smoking on general health are well established (e.g., heart disease, cancer, and chronic lung disease). Smoking also impacts reproductive health. If you smoke, we feel strongly that for general and reproductive health concerns, you must stop. If you are unable to stop smoking on your own, then you should contact your primary care physician to enroll in a smoking cessation program. We are unable to accept you as a donor until you have stopped smoking.

### **Alcohol**

Alcohol should be avoided during the month of egg donation. Although the mechanism of action is unknown, alcohol can interfere with fertility.

### **Recreational Drug Use**

The use of recreational drugs is absolutely contraindicated while donating eggs. Furthermore, the use of intravenous drugs increases the risk of acquiring an HIV and hepatitis infection.

### **Medication Use**

All over the counter medications and non-fertility medications that have been prescribed should be discussed with donor egg team. Herbal remedies should be completely avoided since their effects on fertility are unknown.

### **Aspirin, Motrin and similar products**

Ingestion of aspirin or aspirin-like products (i.e. Motrin, Advil, Anaprox, Aleve, Bayer, Nuprin, etc.) should be avoided during treatment. Tylenol or Extra Strength Tylenol is a suitable alternative.

### **Exercise**

The benefits of exercise on general health and mental well-being are established. As your ovaries are stimulated you may experience abdominal discomfort with vigorous exercise. If you begin to experience these symptoms, reduce your exercise intensity. Following the egg donation process you may resume your previous level activity at a comfortable, gradual pace.

### **Nutrition**

Our general health is influenced by what we eat, how much we eat, and how much energy we expend with activity and exercise. In addition, our nutritional state can impact on reproductive health. As a general recommendation, women should be encouraged to maintain a balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, breads, meats and dairy products. Foods with high content of fats and oils should be used at a minimum. In addition to a balanced diet, caloric intake should be limited to maintain a normal body weight.

## **Important Contact Information**

**For Emergencies call (781) 434-6500, 24 hour**