Donor sperm – information for recipients

## Assessment and screening of sperm donors

Donors are people from all walks of life – there is no such thing as a ‘standard donor’. What they have in common is a desire to help people to achieve the pregnancy they otherwise couldn’t have.

The British Fertility Society guidelines state that all healthy men who are aged between 18 and 40 are eligible to donate. Sperm donors need to be free from any serious medical problem and disability and with no history of congenital, family, hereditary or transmissible disease.

Potential donors will be screened thoroughly before they can donate. The screening process will involve:

* A medical consultation to ensure the donor meets the criteria detailed above and is in good health.
* Implications counselling to ensure that the donor and partner (if applicable) are fully aware of the implications of the donation before proceeding.
* Screening for infectious diseases, including HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Syphilis, HTLV, Cystic Fibrosis carrier status and chromosome analysis.
* An initial semen analysis to ensure their sperm is of suitable quality for donation.

## The donation process

Once they have passed the initial screening process, donors will be asked to attend the clinic multiple times to produce a sufficient quantity of samples for their intended donation. A donor’s samples will be frozen and kept in quarantine for 180 days. The donor will be screened again for infectious diseases after 6 months in order to exclude the possibility of any latent infections. If the second round of screening is clear the donor’s samples will be released from quarantine.

## Sperm donation and the law

Like adopted people, people born from donations have the right to ask the regulatory body: The Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority (HFEA) [http://www.hfea.gov.uk] for the donor’s identity when they reach age 18 or older.

As an HFEA licensed clinic, Harley Street Fertility Clinic must conform to strict medical, legal and ethical standards to ensure that everyone involved in the donation is protected and clear about their legal position:

* It is a legal requirement for donors to consent to their donation in writing before donating sperm for the treatment of others. They can change or withdraw their consent at any time up to the point at which their sperm is used in treatment.
* They can also place some restrictions on their donation – please see the HFEA website for more information.
* They can help create up to ten families
* The person/people who use the donated samples will be the child’s legal and social parent(s) – the donor will not be named on the birth certificate.
* The donor has no legal, financial or social obligations to any child created from their donation either now or in 18 years time.
* Donors must inform us of any inherited disabilities and/or physical and mental illnesses in their family; a donor-conceived person born with an abnormality could sue a donor for damages if it was proved the donor had deliberately withheld information.
* Donors are given a special form for personal details about them that could be handed to the donor-conceived person when they reach age 18 or older. This information enables the child’s parents to talk to them about their origins as they grow up and helps them build a mental picture of their donor.
* If they so desire, we will be able to tell a donor whether a baby/babies were born as a result of their donation and, if so, how many births, how many children, the sex of any such children and/or the year they were born.

## CMV (cytomegalovirus)

Before you start looking for suitable donor sperm samples you must have your blood taken and tested for CMV (cytomegalovirus) IgG and IgM. This can be done at Harley Street Fertility Clinic (result takes 5 days) or your GP may be able to do it for you.

CMV (Cytomegalovirus) is a common virus that over 80% of people will contract at some point during their lifetime. The initial symptoms are usually characterised by cold or flu-like symptoms so many people are unaware that they have actually been infected with CMV. CMV infection has little or no impact for a healthy individual but it can have consequences if a CMV negative woman (someone who has not had CMV) contracts this virus in the early stages of pregnancy as it may have implications for the health of the developing foetus.

Donors who are described as CMV positive have tested positive for CMV IgG which indicates that they have contracted CMV at some point. They have screened negative for CMV IgM which indicates they do not have current CMV infection.

If you are CMV NEGATIVE for both IgG and IgM you should select a CMV NEGATIVE donor. In a small number of cases it may not be possible to find a suitable CMV negative donor; in these cases you must contact your doctor for further advice.

If you are CMV POSTIVE for IgG and negative for IgM then you can choose a CMV POSITIVE or a CMV NEGATIVE donor.

## Blood Group

There is generally no clinical need to choose a donor of a particular blood group (unless the recipient is known to have a rare Rh negative blood group). Some patients may wish to try and choose a specific blood group but keep in mind that if you choose to use the blood type of a donor as one of your selection criteria, you may decrease the number of donor choices available to you.

It is also important to remember that children do not always inherit the same blood type as their biological parents. For example, a male and female couple with blood types A and B could biologically have offspring with any of the four blood types: A, B, O, or AB.

If you wish to know your blood group, then testing can be done at the Clinic (results take 5 days) or your GP may be able to do it for you.

## Sources of donor sperm

Our clinic offers a selection of donor sperm that you can use for treatment and a catalogue is available online:

Harley Street Sperm Bank: <https://hssb.uk>

Alternatively, if suitable donor sperm is not available, we have an established relationship with the following donor banks:

* Xytex (USA) – <http://www.xytex.com>
* European sperm bank [ESB] (Denmark) – <http://www.europeanspermbank.com>
* Semovo (UK) – <https://www.buysperm.co.uk>
* Born Donor Bank (Denmark) – <https://www.borndonorbank.com>
* Fairfax Cryobank (USA) – <https://fairfaxcryobank.com/>
* Cryos International Sperm Bank (Denmark) – c

Should you wish to procure donor sperm from a source not listed above, please speak to an embryologist **before placing an order** to confirm that we will be willing to accept sperm samples from that supplier.

You must organise to have your sperm samples reserved in storage for your use at Harley Street Fertility Clinic **before you start** your treatment cycle for IUI, IVF or ICSI. Please note that when you place your order it can take several weeks for the relevant documentation to be completed and the sperm delivered to the Clinic. When the sperm has arrived at the Clinic you will receive a call from one of the embryologists and you can then contact the nurses to start your treatment cycle.

All samples are ordered directly with the donor bank and then the donor bank will contact us and arrange shipment. Once the samples are received at the Clinic they will be stored for you under your unique identification code.

## Sperm sample requirements

### Donor selection

If you wish to source donor sperm samples from a donor bank then you MUST select an UK compliant donor: **ID-Disclosure (Xytex) or Open donor (ESB)**. Also, remember to **check the CMV status** as described above. This means that the donor bank provides us with the information required to register the donor with the HFEA so that the donor’s details are on the record for any child born as a result of his donation to possibly access when the child is at least 18 years old. Each donor can achieve a maximum of ten families in the UK so not all the listed ID-disclosure/ open donors may be available for import into the UK.

### Quantity

Usually one vial (also referred to as one ampoule or 0.5 ml) is used per treatment cycle. Occasionally, the sperm in one vial does not survive the freezing process well and it may be necessary to thaw a second vial or to perform ICSI instead of IVF. Therefore, we insist that you import at least 2 vials. Most patients choose to import 2-6 vials but this is ultimately dependent on how many treatment cycles you might be prepared to undergo. You may also wish to consider that you may want to import extra vials to attempt for a sibling pregnancy; you should contact the donor bank directly to discuss possible future availability of any individual donor.

If you are a same-sex couple both wishing to have treatment with the same donor, please discuss this with the Donor Bank prior to your order.

Please be aware that there is no refund or buy-back option available for unused samples.

### Quality or grade

Samples should be suitable for the treatment you are planning to undertake.

Our lab will routinely prepare and wash all sperm samples on the day of treatment at no extra charge, therefore unwashed vials are usually more cost effective.

## Sperm banks

Please ensure you check all costs directly with each sperm bank, including any extras such as shipping, administration fees or charges for pregnancy slots.

### Harley Street Sperm Bank (HSSB)

We have launched our own in house sperm bank. All of our sperm samples are suitable for user at the Clinic. We supply primarily unwashed samples suitable for all treatments.

We have a catalogue of donors, which can be accessed here:

<https://www.hssb.uk>

Please note, we hold a few samples from some donors, who are not listed on the website. So if you are looking for someone in particular, please reach out to our donor bank team via email: [hello@hssb.uk](mailto:hello@hssb.uk)

### Xytex

The CMV status of all the donors is clearly shown on the Xytex website. Xytex is based in the USA.

Four types of vials (units) are available: unwashed, prewashed, ART and ICSI. These are suitable for several treatments as follows:

* IUI treatment: unwashed units
* IVF treatment: unwashed, prewashed or ART units
* ICSI treatment: unwashed, prewashed, ART or ICSI units

<http://www.xytex.com>

### Semovo

Semovo is based in the UK and thus all of their donors are suitable for use.

Semovo only supply one type of ampoule that will be suitable for all types of treatment.

Semovo offer a personalised matching service after you have provided them with your details and will only provide you with donors with a suitable CMV status.

You can order directly through their website: <http://www.buysperm.co.uk>

### Born Donor Bank

The CMV status of all donors is clearly shown on their website. You will need to ensure you select ID-release donors.

You should order ICI grade samples from this donor bank.

### <https://www.borndonorbank.com/>

### Fairfax Cryobank

You should order UK compliant ICI ART grade samples from this donor bank.

The website provides the CMV status of donors.

<https://fairfaxcryobank.com/>

### Cryos International Sperm Bank

You should order at least 2 MOT10 straws. The samples should be from an ID release donor.

The website provides the CMV status of donors.

<https://www.cryosinternational.com/>

## Extra costs

Please note there is an administrative charge for importing donor sperm and an annual storage fee payable (please refer to current price list for fees).

## Further reading

Your decision to use donor sperm is an important one with life-long implications. There are many issues to consider, and some of them are complicated.

You may also wish to discuss those issues with the counsellor at the clinic, as they will have experience in helping you explore the implications of your decision, now and in the future.

The following organisations can provide you with further information and support on using donor sperm:

1. Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) [http://www.hfea.gov.uk]

The regulator of fertility treatment in the UK.

1. National Gamete Donation Trust (NGDT) [http://www.ngdt.co.uk]]

NGDT is a registered charity and acts as a central reference point for issues pertaining to sperm, egg and embryo donation in the UK.

1. Donor Conception Network [http://www.dcnetwork.org]

The Donor Conception Network is a supportive network of over 2,000 people who have been involved in donor conception, as donors, recipients or children conceived from donation

## Contact information

If you need any further information or advice, it is often best to contact the donor bank directly for specific donor information as we do not have any extra access to their services. However, if you need further general support and advice, please contact our Laboratory on 020 74368 6838 or [lab@hsfc.org.uk](mailto:lab@hsfc.org.uk).

PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU HAVE SAMPLES FROM MORE THAN ONE DONOR STORED AT THE CLINIC, IT IS ESSENTIAL YOU MAKE IT CLEAR WHICH DONOR YOU INTEND TO USE AT THE START OF EACH CYCLE.