Guide to Egg Donation
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Introduction
Welcome to the egg donor program at Houston Fertility Institute. Our facility matches potential egg donors to recipient couples who are otherwise infertile due to certain medical conditions. 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 20 and 29, may volunteer to donate her eggs. You may stay in the donor program until you reach 32 years of age. They should have not at any time been put at high-risk for HIV contraction nor had any sexually transmitted disease within the last 12 months. Egg donors must also be responsible, dependable, and committed to the process.

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 straightforward medical and psychological screening tests outlined on the pages to follow. When these have been successfully completed, the egg donor takes injections of fertility medications for roughly 10-12 days to help more eggs mature than would normally in a menstrual cycle. Donors are monitored throughout stimulation via hormone blood tests and vaginal ultrasounds to determine how well the medication is working and if the dosage is accurate. These tests typically require a minimum of 5 morning office visits. Once it is determined that the eggs are mature, the eggs are collected by inserting a thin ultrasound guided needle through the top of the vagina and into the ovarian follicle. The egg retrieval is a minor surgical procedure performed under anesthesia. It takes approximately 20 minutes and is done at our surgical facility in our Fondren office by our physicians. Donors must have transportation and escort from the hospital on retrieval day due to the sedation.

Financial Obligations?
Egg donors are not expected to pay for the medical and psychological screening tests, medications, or procedures leading up to, or during, the donation cycle. Donors will receive financial compensation for the time and energy they put into donating their eggs.
The Process of Egg Donation – An overview

There are a number of steps to becoming an egg donor. The following steps are outlined below:

- **Online Application and Pictures**
  An application must be completed online and pictures uploaded to the application. The pictures are a critical aspect of the application process as they are used to create your profile on the donor website. Not only should these pictures be as professional as possible to increase your chances of selection, but also our recipients will use these pictures to match your physical characteristics with her family.

- **Donor Medical Record Review and Family History Screening Questionnaire**
  Once we have established that you meet our donor criteria, you will be given a login code for a donor eligibility website to complete a questionnaire. This questionnaire covers your medical, social, and family history. When the questionnaire is completed, a donor coordinator will call to review it with you and clarify any additional information needed.

- **Baseline Testing**
  After the questionnaire is completed and reviewed with a donor coordinator, you will be instructed to contact the donor department with the start of your menstrual cycle to schedule a baseline testing appointment. This appointment will include a vaginal ultrasound, to evaluate the ovaries, as well as blood tests, to evaluate hormones and current health status. You will also have blood drawn to test for infectious diseases such as HIV, Hepatitis, Syphilis, and urine tests for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea. Blood will also be tested for the presence of drugs and nicotine. If any tests return positive, you will not be eligible to donate with Houston Fertility Institute.

- **Genetic Testing**
  The final step in the application process is genetic carrier testing. When all baseline results are final and normal, a donor coordinator will contact you to schedule a genetic testing appointment. This appointment will be a lab work only appointment and a blood sample will be needed to test if genetic carrier traits are present. If any carrier traits are present, you will not be able to donate with Houston Fertility Institute.

- **Matching Donors and Recipients**
  Once all screening tests are completed, your profile will be active on our donor database for recipients to view while selecting their donor. Some donors may be selected by a recipient couple immediately while other donors may not be selected for months. If at any time an egg donor decides not to participate in the program, she must simply notify the egg donor department.

- **Psychological Interview**
  Once selected by a recipient, we require all egg donors to see a Houston Fertility Institute’s approved 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 psychologist will help you explore many issues so you will feel confident in your choice to donate eggs.
• **Injection Lesson**  
One of our donor coordinators will also make arrangements for you to learn about the medications that you will use during the treatment cycle and how to administer them. The stimulation medication is all administered subcutaneously. A mock calendar can be found on the subsequent pages.

• **Physical exam**  
All donors are required to meet with a Houston Fertility Institute physician for a brief physical exam prior to their egg donation.

• **Consent Forms**  
Although donors remain anonymous and do not have any legal rights or obligations to any child born from treatment, all donors are required to sign Houston Fertility Institute consent forms for egg donation. The consent forms will clarify legal issues and describe the egg donation procedure including the risks. Consent forms must be signed for each donation cycle. Identities of the donors and recipients are never known to one another and are kept in strict confidentiality.

• **The Egg Donation Cycle**  
Once all steps are completed, and both donor and recipient start their periods, the fertility medication is started to stimulate the ovaries to produce eggs. Your two weeks of stimulation will not be easy nor will it be convenient but it is necessary that you commit to this process thoroughly and be available to attend all morning appointments between the hours of 8am and 11am. The recipient couple is investing a great sum of money in their quest to make the dream of having a child a reality. Their dream is dependent on you.

**Risks of Egg Donation**

The risks and possible side effects from the medications used to increase the number of eggs produced include hot flashes, headaches, and sleeplessness. More serious but less common risks include:

- **Ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome** (occurring in less than 5% of all cycles) causes fluid retention, abdominal discomfort, nausea and vomiting. When severe, it can result in blood clots, kidney damage, ovarian torsion, and chest and abdominal fluid collections, requiring hospitalization for monitoring.

- **Ovarian torsion** (occurring in less than 1% of all cycles) occurs when the stimulated ovary twists on itself cutting off its own blood supply. Surgery is generally required to untwist or remove it.

- Controversial studies link ovarian stimulation drugs to the development of **ovarian cancer**. Until further research is available, the careful use of ovarian stimulation drugs is still reasonable.

- The risk of **pregnancy** (including multiple gestation pregnancy) during the cycle of injectable fertility medication and following egg retrieval is very high.
**Recommendations**

At Houston Fertility Institute, 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 healthy baby. There are certain things you can do to help us achieve these goals.

**Sexual Intercourse:** During the month that you are donating eggs and the month that follows, we ask you to use two barrier methods for birth control (example: condoms and foam). Abstaining from sexual intercourse for these two months is highly recommended. 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, you will not be eligible to donate your eggs.

**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 your egg donor coordinator. Herbal remedies should be completely avoided since their effects on fertility are unknown. Aspirin, Motrin and similar products (i.e. Motrin, Advil, Anaprox, Aleve, Bayer, 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 of 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 reproductive health. As a general recommendation, women are 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. We also suggest supplementing your diet with a multivitamin or prenatal vitamin if possible.
**Egg Donation Application Check List**

1. Review the Guide to Egg Donation carefully.
2. Complete the online application at www.hfidonor.com.
3. Upload 2 photos of yourself to submit with the application.
   a. Please include both a close up picture and a full body picture. Our recipients will see these pictures, and to increase your chances of selection, you want these pictures to be as professional as possible.
   b. Also note no one can be in the pictures with you. Low cut tops, short shorts, cell phones, and seatbelts should all be avoided in the pictures. Please also be aware of your background keeping it simple and making sure there are no identifying objects in the photo.
4. Once the pictures are received and loaded to your profile, you will be contacted by a donor coordinator with instructions for completing an eligibility questionnaire online which will include both a medical record review and family history information.
5. Your completed questionnaire responses will be reviewed with a donor coordinator and if this step is verified you will be given instructions to call us with your period.
6. Once you start your period, you will need to contact the donor department to be scheduled for your baseline screening appointment at any one of our offices. Baseline testing must occur on cycle day 2, 3 or 4.
7. Test results take about a week to come back. Any point if tests come back abnormal, you will be contacted with the results but will be ineligible to donate. If these results are normal, you will be called to schedule the second screening appointment consisting of blood work to test genetic carrier traits.
8. Once genetic blood work results are back, which takes about 2 weeks, and these results are normal, your profile will be active on the donor website.
9. Once a recipient chooses you, you will be contacted and given instructions to synchronize your cycle with the recipient’s cycle. You will also be scheduled for a psychological evaluation, injection teaching visit, and physical exam.
10. You are eligible to donate up to six times.

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions or need further clarification please contact one of our egg donor coordinators. You are a very special person for wanting to help couples achieve their dream of having a family. We want to thank you for your decision and let you know that we are here to support you through the process.

Houston Fertility Institute’s Egg Donor Coordination Department can be reached at 281-357-1881 option 6.

**Our Locations**

Office visits during the egg stimulation cycle can be at any of the following locations:
Houston/Piney Point
2500 Fondren, Suite 300
Houston, TX 77063
Office: 713-490-2527
Fax: 713-334-5547

Medical Center - Hermann
6400 Fannin, Suite 2000
Houston, TX 77030
Office: 713-796-1434
Fax: 713-796-1438

Medical Center – Women’s
7400 Fannin, Suite 730
Houston, TX 77054
Office: 713-796-9888
Fax: 713-796-9898

Willowbrook
18220 State Hwy 249, Suite 300
Houston, TX 77070
Office: 832-237-1434
Fax: 832-237-1436

The Woodlands
17183 I 45 South, Suite 540
The Woodlands, TX 77385
Office: 281-681-0480
Fax: 281-681-9170

Pearland
10907 Memorial Hermann Drive, Suite 330
Pearland, TX 77584
Office: 713-830-1060
Fax: 713-830-1061

North Cypress
21216 Northwest Frwy, Suite 580
Cypress, TX 77429
Office: 281-890-5216
Fax: 281-890-5428

Katy
23920 Katy Frwy, Suite 340
Katy, TX 77493
Office: 281-693-2435
Fax: 281-693-2455

Sugarland
16605 Southwest Frwy, Suite 460
Sugarland, TX 77479
Office: 281-242-3434
Fax: 281-242-3436

Clear Lake
251 Medical Center Blvd, Suite 125
Webster, TX 77598
Office: 281-554-5111
Fax: 281-554-5115

Beaumont
740 Hospital Drive, Suite 110
Beaumont, TX 77701
Office: 409-212-1639
Fax: 409-212-1668

Kingwood
350 Kingwood Medical Drive, Suite 210
Kingwood, TX 77339
Office: 281-359-2229
Fax: 281-359-2329
Thank you again for your interest in our program and your generosity in helping others!

**Egg Donation Cycle Protocol**

Once selected by a recipient, here is what to expect next:

1. Call the egg donor coordinator on Day 1 of your menstrual period – the first day of full flow. If Day 1 is a weekend or holiday, call on the following business day.

2. Our egg donor coordinator will place you on birth control pills to align your menstrual cycle and the recipient’s menstrual cycle. You will also receive information to schedule your psychological evaluation, be scheduled for a medication teaching visit, and given instructions to complete an FDA questionnaire required for egg donation.

3. You will be provided with a donor calendar to outline appointments and medications. Please review this calendar carefully (a sample calendar is included below). Per this calendar and your donor coordinator nurse, you will be instructed when to stop your birth control pills and when to return for a baseline vaginal ultrasound and blood work and donor physical exam.

4. Along with the ultrasound and blood work, at your baseline appointment you will sign consent forms for egg donation. If you are married, your husband must also sign consent forms.

5. Results of your morning baseline appointment will be released in the afternoon. If the baseline results are normal, you will be given instructions when you will start the stimulation medication with the specific dose of stimulation medication to be injected.

6. After approximately 2-3 days of stimulation medication, you will return for another vaginal ultrasound and blood work. You will continue returning every other day for the next 4-5 morning office visits for monitoring until it is determined you are ready for the Lupron injection which causes the eggs in the follicles to mature and prepare for egg collection.

7. Once the eggs have reached maturity, you will be given exact times to administer the Lupron trigger injections. The Lupron comes in 2 prefilled syringes and is injected into the sub-q area of the stomach – the same place as the stimulation shots. This is a timed injection that correlates to the time of your egg retrieval.
   a. **Administer the 1st injection at the EXACT time instructed.**
   b. The Lupron You will repeat the injection with the 2nd syringe of Lupron 12 hours to follow the 1st.
   c. **Start your antibiotics.**
   d. Abstain from intercourse from this point. Remember, you will be VERY fertile for the next month.
8. **The egg retrieval:** You must arrive at our Fondren surgical center at the time specified. The surgical center will call you with specific instructions but generally instructions are:
   a. Arrive to surgery center one hour before retrieval.
   b. Do NOT eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your procedure.
   c. Do NOT eat or drink anything the morning of your procedure. Take your antibiotic when you arrive back home since your stomach will be empty.
   d. Arrive to the hospital on time.
   e. Do not bring any valuables with you.
   f. Dress comfortably, no jewelry, no make-up, no perfume.
   g. Someone must drive you home following the procedure. Do not return to work, you should just rest for the remainder of the day.
   h. Payment for your generosity will be mailed to you within 5 business days.

9. After the procedure you may experience mild discomfort, this is normal. You may take Tylenol per package directions or pain medication if it was prescribed by our physicians. Please ask the doctor doing the egg retrieval for a prescription if you would like one. Please do not hesitate to call our office with any questions or concerns.

   - **Reasons to Call Immediately:**
     i. There is a **rare but slight risk** of blood clots:
        a. Pain or swelling of legs or arms
        b. Shortness of breath
     ii. Increased estrogen and egg production may cause mild to moderate cramping. However, if symptoms are more severe, it may an indication of **Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syndrome**. Symptoms that need to be reported to the office as soon as possible are:
        a. Severe cramping that is not helped by Tylenol and bed rest.
        b. Shortness of breath even while sitting.
        c. Decreased urination.
     iii. If you do get OHSS that is causing concerns, we may admit you to the hospital. You will be given intravenous (I.V.) fluids to treat the dehydration, and medications to help with nausea and pain if needed.

10. You should expect to start your period within 2-3 weeks following the egg retrieval. Abstain from intercourse until your period, and use protection for the following month.
Donor IVF Calendar (Lupron Trigger)

* THIS CALENDAR IS ONLY AN ESTIMATE AND CAN CHANGE
* DO NOT STOP OR START ANY MEDICATION UNTIL TOLD TO
* DOSE CAN CHANGE AFTER EACH ULTRASOUND
* CALENDAR ESTIMATES 10 DAYS OF STIMULATION MEDICATIONS
* KEEP TRACK OF MEDICATIONS YOU HAVE LEFT – ESPECIALLY BEFORE THE WEEKEND
* CONSENTS MUST BE SIGNED BY DONOR & SPOUSE BY CYCLE DAY 5 OR CYCLE WILL BE CANCELED

Baseline appointment for U/S, BW, physical exam, and teaching will be on ________

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**TUESDAY**  | **WEDNESDAY**  | **THURSDAY**  | **FRIDAY**  | **SATURDAY**  | **SUNDAY**  | **MONDAY**

Appt: US/BW
Possible 1st Lupron Trigger Injection TIME:
Zpack – Take 2 pills today only
Possible 2nd Lupron Trigger Injection TIME:
Zpack – Take 1 pill daily
Nothing to eat or drink after midnight
POSSIBLE EGG RETRIEVAL
Zpack 1 daily
Zpack 1 daily
Zpack 1 daily

**REMEMBER:**
You are very fertile this month and should use protection until your next period to avoid pregnancy.
**Bravelle and Menopur** come in powder form, **EACH VIAL IS 75 units.** Therefore a dose of 150U = 2 vials of powder. Mix number of vials directed with ½-1 cc of water. You can mix both meds together to give as one shot. Inject sub-q.

**Gonal F** comes in a multi dose vial. Mix the medication with the liquid provided. Keep medication refrigerated after mixed. You will draw up dose as directed. It can be mixed with Menopur to give as one shot. Inject sub-q.

**Cetrotide** is used to prevent the premature ovulation of the eggs. Take ONLY when instructed. Inject sub-q. Keep refrigerated.

**Lupron** induces ovulation. It comes already mixed. Inject one syringe, sub-q, at the SPECIFIC time instructed. A second injection will be given 12 hours later. This medication but be kept refrigerated.

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Legend:
U/S=vaginal ultrasound, BW=blood work to check hormone levels, Zpack=antibiotics to start on day of Lupron injection