



## **Donor Guide book:**

### **What is IVF?**

IVF (In Vitro Fertilisation) is a treatment by which fertilisation of eggs by sperm takes place outside the body in a dish in an IVF laboratory. An ovary has a pool of immature eggs. In a woman's natural cycle, it is usual to produce one egg each month, which is released from the developing follicle (fluid filled sacs) two weeks before the next period starts. In IVF cycles the aim is to achieve the growth and development of several follicles in order to maximise the chance of collecting several eggs. Injections of follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) are taken from the start of the cycle to stimulate growth. and when the follicles are mature the eggs are collected. These are then put together with the sperm in the laboratory to allow fertilisation to take place. The fertilised eggs are allowed to grow in the laboratory for 3 - 5 days before being replaced in the recipient or surrogates womb (uterus).

### **Why is egg donation needed?**

Egg donation offers new hope for a large number of women who previously thought they could never have children. For example women who have lost their ovaries or the function of their ovaries whilst young. This could be because the ovaries have never developed properly, or because of cancer, surgery, early menopause, low egg reserve and poor egg quality.

### **Who can become an egg donor?**

Egg donors are young women, usually between the ages of 20 and 32, who are willing to provide their eggs to a recipient couple. You need to be healthy, preferably a non-smoker, free of any known genetic diseases, with a healthy BMI between 18-27. You also need to have done your own extensive research into what it means to be an egg donor and be 100% comfortable in your decision to help a couple have the child/children they have been dreaming of. Being an anonymous donor means that your identity shall never be released to the recipient couple and you will never be contact by any children born as a result of your donation.

### **What tests are performed on the donor?**

You will be tested for infections such as HIV, Hepatitis B and syphilis. You will also have hormone tests done to ensure that you are a good candidate to be an egg donor these include, Prolactin, oestrogen, Progesterone, Follicle stimulating hormone, Luteinizing hormone as well as an AMH test. You will also need to undergo a trans-vaginal ultra sound to check that you do not have any ovarian cysts and also to count your resting follicle count. These tests will only be performed once we have a confirmed egg donor match with you and a recipient couple. These tests are usually done on day 2 or day 3 of your menstrual cycle.

### **Are there any costs involved?**

As an egg donor no expenses will be incurred by you. All medical expenses will be covered by your recipient couple. And since you are completing an international egg donor cycle all flights, hotel, daily food, transport and travel insurance will also be paid for by your recipient couple.

### **What if I change my mind?**

By law, when you are matched to be an egg donor you will be provided with an egg donor contract which you will need to sign consenting to being an egg donor, donating your eggs to your recipient couple. You can change your mind up to the point before you undergo any medical donor screening tests.

### **How many times can Donors donate?**

Throughout the world there are different opinions on what is considered an appropriate number of donations, in south Africa, USA and Australia donors are limited to doing 6 donor cycles. However in the UK the law states that a donor may donate to up to 10 different families. Traveling donors will only allow an egg donor to donate more than 6 times if she has already completed her family and is happy with the number of children she has.

### **What are Ultrasound scans?**

Ultrasound is a simple painless procedure and is harmless. For any fertility treatments the scans are usually vaginal, so the probe from the scan machine is put inside the vagina to get a better view of the ovaries.

### **The IVF cycle consists of five stages:**

1. Stimulation of the ovary with fertility drugs to enhance egg production (superovulation)
2. Collection of mature eggs from the ovary (egg collection)
3. Preparation of motile sperm from the male
4. Mixing of eggs and sperm in the laboratory to allow fertilisation to occur
5. Selection of the one or two (occasionally three in some circumstances) best embryos and transferring these to the uterus (embryo transfer)

### **Egg Donor Antagonist protocol**

Once you have been approved to be an egg donor, you will need to go onto birth control pills 6-8 weeks before you are due to depart for Bangkok, India or Mexico. You will be told which date to take your last active birth control pill and your period will start 3-4 days after this last active pill. You will start your Gonal-F FSH injections on day 2 or 3 of your period. You will be informed of your dose and this injection is to be taken once a day at the same time each day. You will need to keep the Gonal-f pen in the fridge as it needs to be kept cold, please remember that these pens cost around R3000 so it is important that you look after them correctly. You will arrive at the international clinic after having 5-6 injections, once you have arrived your co-ordinator will accompany the group of donors to the clinic for each scan.

Regular scans will monitor the development of the follicles and once the largest one is over 14mm in diameter, the doctor may advise you to start another injection called Cetrotide. Cetrotide is used to prevent spontaneous ovulation which would mean that the whole donor cycle would be a waste. This decision will be made based on your hormone blood results. While overseas you will normally undergo 2 ultrasound scans to monitor the development of the follicles. During each ultrasound scan the number and size of the follicles is measured. On the day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> scan the doctor will inform us when your egg retrieval day will be and they will also inform us what time your HCG trigger will need to be taken.

Unfortunately FSH, Cetrotide and Ovitrelle have to be taken as injections otherwise they would be destroyed in the stomach if they were taken orally. Whilst the idea of taking injections may seem daunting, the needles used for the injections are very small and are given in the fatty tissue in the stomach area. You will also have your co-ordinator and

other egg donors with you who will be able to assist you with the injections should you prefer not to give them to yourself. You will normally take around 8-10 injections of Gonal-f , 2 injections of cetrotide from around day 9/10 and 1 injection of Ovidrell the trigger shot which suspends the eggs into the fluid filled follicles.

## **Egg Collection Day:**

Egg collection will usually take place on day 12/13 of the donor cycle. It takes place between 36 and 38 hours after taking the trigger injection of HCG. The eggs are collected vaginally under ultrasound guidance. As with all scans during treatment, a vaginal ultrasound probe is introduced into your vagina. A fine aspiration needle is passed along a guide attached to the probe and passes gently through the top of your vagina into each ovary. The follicles and tip of the needle can be clearly seen on the ultrasound screen. As the tip of the needle passes into each follicle, the fluid gets sucked out, and the follicle collapses. The fluid is collected in test tubes which are passed to the embryologist in the IVF laboratory. The fluid is then examined under a microscope to look for the eggs (eggs are tiny 0.1 mm in diameter, smaller than a full stop on a sheet of paper). The needle is passed from one follicle to the next until all are emptied. The procedure should take between 20- 25 minutes, depending on the number of follicles. Most, but not all follicles should contain an egg. The egg collection will be performed under twigh-light sedation , this means you will be in a deep sleep for the duration of the procedure , you will not experience any pain or discomfort during the egg collection. Twigh-light sedation is safer than general anaesthetic and donor recover much quicker from it, You will be allowed to leave 2-3hours after the procedure.

After the egg collection you may feel drowsy on and off throughout the day. You will be taken back to the hotel with the rest of the donors that had the procedure done on that day and your co-ordinator will instruct you to rest for the rest of the day either in bed or next to the hotel pool. It is also very important that you drink plenty of water as this will help speed up your recovery time. It is not uncommon following egg collection to feel some lower abdominal discomfort lasting 1-2days, for which any mild pain killer can be taken to ease the discomfort. A small amount of vaginal bleeding is also normal. Complications are rare, however every operative procedure is associated with a small risk of infection and bleeding.

Once the egg collection has taken place your next period will take place within the next 10-14days. You need to take extra precaution over the next 6-8weeks as your body will have an increased fertility from being on the Gonal-F fertility drugs , so you will have a higher risk of falling pregnant during this time. We advise our egg donors that only once they have completed one full packet of birth control after the completing their donor cycle then they should be safe to have sex without a condom.

## **Will the medication give me side effects?**

Very few people report side effects from the medications that are used in egg donation treatment – generally, the women who are most likely to experience side effects will be those women who are very sensitive to hormonal changes occurring during their own menstrual cycle. If you do have side effects, they are likely to be those symptoms that are associated with hormonal changes, ie: hot flashes, headache, irritability, breast swelling/tenderness, mood swings, increased vaginal secretions. Side effects should not be severe and will disappear once medications are stopped at the end of treatment. Of course, any side effects should be reported directly to your egg donor co-ordinator who is there to ensure that you are receiving the best medical treatment possible and that you are a happy healthy donor during your donor cycle.

## **Will egg donation affect my fertility?**

Egg donation should not decrease your natural fertility. In fact the opposite may be true – you will be more fertile during and just after treatment! You should bear in mind however that your natural fertility will decline with time. For this reason you are encouraged not to delay your own childbearing

## **Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syndrome**

OHSS occurs in about 1 % of women on IVF treatment despite all possible precautions being taken.

Symptoms include:

- Abdominal bloating and associated discomfort
- Nausea / Vomiting
- Shortness of breath
- Dehydration

The ovaries become very large and surrounded by fluid. In severe cases this causes dehydration and thickening of the blood which may lead to the formation of clots. We therefore closely monitor all women at risk of OHSS and admit them to hospital if this becomes necessary. Provided OHSS is diagnosed early and managed correctly, symptoms resolve spontaneously with very little medical intervention. Occasionally intravenous fluids and antisickness drugs are required and in rare cases the excess fluid around the ovaries needs to be drained. It is important to drink plenty of fluids and if you are worried that you may be developing symptoms, you need to inform your co-ordinator ASAP no matter what time of day or night.

## **What is the chance of my donor cycle resulting in a Positive pregnancy?**

The success of the egg donation depends on many factors but is not considered to be related to the age of the recipient. The average success rate for donor cycles ranges between of 55-70% for all egg donor cycles depending on the quality of the eggs, sperm and resulting embryos. So even if you donate 10 A grade eggs there is no guarantee that your recipient couple will in fact fall pregnant as there are many factors that contribute to a successful pregnancy taking place.

## **Egg Donor Compensation Levels For International Donations:**

Egg Donors are compensated for their generosity and commitment to the egg donor program.

First time Donor	R26.000
2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Proven Donor	R28.000
4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> Proven Donor	R30.000
6 <sup>th</sup> Proven Donor	R32.000

## **How long can I donate again after I complete a donor cycle?**

Traveling Donors require our egg donors to have a minimum of a 3 month gap between each egg donor cycle.

## **How long will I be out of the country for?**

You will be away for approximately 10-12days at a time.

## **Do I go on my own , who looks after me?**

The benefit of being an egg donor for Traveling Donors is that you will travel in groups of 4-6 egg donors and you will have a highly skilled donor co-ordinator traveling with you to ensure that you understand everything during your donor cycle.

## **Accommodation, Food and Transport while Away:**

You will stay in a 4star hotel and you will be required to share a large Twin Bed Hotel room with a full bathroom, shower and bath, your room will have a small kitchenette in it as well. Your hotel accommodation will include buffet breakfast every morning and you will be given a daily allowance of 250Bhat for food. All transport to and from the clinic will be covered by Traveling Donors. Traveling Donors will also provide you with a sky train rail card with 15 travel points on it for your own use to shopping malls and sight-seeing destinations.

### **An Example Donor Cycle IVF Timeline for Bangkok:**

4<sup>th</sup> July – depart from South Africa

5<sup>th</sup> July – Arrive in Bangkok , check into hotel , group meeting at dinner

6<sup>th</sup> July - First clinic appointment , registration , follicle scan , blood test have to be at the hospital at 10am.

7<sup>th</sup> July– Day off , we will arrange tours ,shopping and sight seeing

8<sup>th</sup> July – Day off

9<sup>th</sup> July – Second clinic check-up, follicle scan , bloods and egg pick up date finalised.

10<sup>th</sup> July – Day off, Trigger shot in the evening

11<sup>th</sup> July – Day Off no extreme activities NO INJECTIONS TODAY ☺

12<sup>th</sup> July – EGG PICK UP DAY EARLY MORNING , REST IN THE AFTERNOON

13<sup>th</sup> July – Rest Day , you need to take it easy for 24-36 hours post egg pick up

14<sup>th</sup> July – FREE TIME

15<sup>th</sup> July – Last Day in Bangkok ,

**THIS TIMELINE IS A ROUGH GUIDELINE AND MAY CHANGE SLIHTLY DEPENDING ON EACH DONORS  
PROGRESS.**

If you have any further questions regarding being an egg donor please feel free to email us at :

[info@travelingdonors.com](mailto:info@travelingdonors.com)

Look forward to hearing from you.