

fertilityplus
Te Korito



Information for Embryo Donation

Embryo donation in New Zealand is legal, and regulated.

Fertility Plus adheres to the Guidelines established by the Advisory Committee on Assisted Reproductive Technology (ACART) on Embryo Donation (www.acart.health.govt.nz).

All embryo donations require an application to the Ethics Committee on Assisted Reproductive Technology (ECART) (www.ecart.health.govt.nz), for approval prior to the donation. The Fertility Plus counsellors work through this process with you.

What is embryo donation?

If a couple has frozen embryos remaining in storage after they have completed their family, they may wish to consider donating one or more of those embryos to someone else experiencing infertility. Potential recipients can be known to the donors or introduced through the clinic, and might be single women, same-sex couples or heterosexual couples, including those who require the help of a surrogate.

Who can choose to donate embryos?

Couples who have completed their families can donate their embryos, and preferably with their youngest child being at least 18 months old at the commencement of the ECART application process. It is also preferable that the donating woman was age 37 or under at the time the embryos were created and that there are at least 2 blastocysts to donate. If the woman was older or if there is only one blastocyst or the embryos are 2PN's, then we will consider on a case by case basis. For 2PN's, donors may be asked to consider allowing us to thaw the 2PN's for culture to blastocyst stage. Embryos created with the assistance of donor gametes may also be donated. In these circumstances, the age of the gamete donor may be considered. In addition, consent from the gamete donor will also be required for embryo donation to proceed.

What will the process involve for donors?

- Donors will need to attend at least two implications counselling sessions with a Fertility Plus counsellor. Both partners need to attend each session.
- Have a review appointment with a Fertility Plus Medical Specialist and give a full medical/health family history.
- Review recipient profiles and when you have chosen a profile, complete a non-identifying profile which will then be shown to the selected recipients with your permission.
- Meet with the potential recipient(s) selected and Fertility Plus counsellors for a joint counselling session.

What will the process involve for recipients?

- As required by ECART, recipients also need to attend at least two implications counselling sessions. If a recipient woman has a partner, they must also attend.
- Recipients are required to have a Fertility Plus medical consultation, do bloods tests and other medical work up as required.
- Complete a non-identifying profile and consent to this being shown to donor couples.
- Consent to Fertility Plus carrying out Police Vetting (as required by ECART).
- A meeting or phone consultation with a Fertility Plus embryologist, to discuss the developmental stage at which the embryos were frozen and the grade of the embryo(s).
- If your profile is the one selected by the donor couple, meet with donor couple and Fertility Plus counsellors for a joint counselling session.

Once the required appointments are complete, the Fertility Plus counsellors collate all the subsequent reports to submit as an application to ECART. These applications are non-identifying. ECART meet five to six times per year and usually the entire ECART application process takes approximately three to six months. Once Fertility Plus has received an approval from ECART, we will arrange consent signing and confirm plans for the recipients to commence an embryo transfer.

Recipients commit to paying for the ECART application (please refer to the Fertility Plus list of current charges). Unfortunately there is no public funding for ECART applications, however some recipients may have public funding available to cover the cost of embryo transfers. This will be discussed during the medical consultation.

Are there any legal implications for donors and recipients?

There are some legal implications, including those under the Human Assisted Reproductive Technology Act 2004. This requires Fertility Plus and the Office of the Registrar General to record and keep certain information about you which a child born from the embryo donation programme can access at 18 years of age. The counsellors at Fertility Plus will discuss the legal implications in more detail with you and give you a brochure about the Donor Register.

It is also very important for donors and recipients to understand that under the Status of Children Amendment Act 2004, the recipient woman and her partner at the time of the birth are the legal parents of the child. The recipient(s) cannot decline legal responsibility for a child once an embryo transfer has taken place. The recipient(s) does not have to go through any legal process such as adoption as they are automatically the legal parent(s). Any decisions in regard to a pregnancy e.g. whether or not to continue a pregnancy rests solely with the recipient(s) as the

parent(s).

Donor couples can withdraw from the donation (as can recipients) at any time up until an embryo has been transferred to the uterus of the recipient woman.

In New Zealand, full genetic siblings can be produced in two families only. Therefore embryo donors can donate to one recipient or recipient couple.

In New Zealand, it is anticipated that there will be openness, and some on-going contact between donor and recipient families, if there is a birth. Contact and communication usually evolves over time and varies depending on the needs and wishes of the parties in each donation situation.

How long can embryos be stored?

In 2010, amendments were made to the limits of storage. If embryos were stored prior to 22 November 2004 (when the HART Act commenced), the storage limit was 10 years from that date, i.e. 22 November 2014, and you will have already been contacted by the clinic in this regard.

For embryos stored after 2004, the storage is calculated from the date they were first stored, for example if you stored your embryos in 2017 you will need to make some decisions before 2027. You will need to start making decisions about your embryos at least 6 months prior to your storage deadline date. If you are considering donation, you need to apply to ECART for an extension of storage. The clinic can assist with this process. Applications must be made in advance of the storage deadline or else they will not be considered.

Fee structure for Embryo Donation

The application fee is inclusive of:

Counselling services

- a) Five Counselling sessions
 - Two sessions for Donor Woman (DW) and Donor Man (DM)
 - Two sessions for Recipient Woman and Recipient Partner (if applicable)
 - One joint counselling session with all parties together
 - Any further sessions required for the application process will be at an additional cost at the current counselling rate.
- b) Three counselling reports as required for the Ethics Committee on Assisted Reproductive Technology (ECART) application and based on the counselling sessions as above.

- c) Co-ordination of the entire application including liaison with Fertility Plus clinic staff, other health professionals as required, and ECART Secretariat.

Medical specialist services

- a) 1 x appointment with Medical specialist for Donor Woman and Donor Man
1 x appointment with Medical specialist for Recipient Women and Recipient partner (if applicable)
- b) Medical specialist's reports for ECART application and liaison with other medical specialists as required.

Additional appointments (if required) will be billed at the medical review consultation price.

We will invoice you the first 50% of the application fee at the time of the first appointment for the ECART application and the final 50% when the application is ready for submission to ECART. If for any reason your application does not proceed to be submitted to ECART, we will discuss with you if you are entitled to any partial refund. Unfortunately, there is no public funding to cover the cost of ECART applications therefore all applications need to be privately funded by recipients. The cost of treatment for embryo donation is calculated separately to the ECART application fee. If recipients have some public funding remaining, this can be used for treatment, otherwise private treatment charges apply. Please refer to the current Fertility Plus Fee Schedule for current ECART application and treatment costs.

**For more information, you are welcome to contact the
Fertility Plus Counsellors on (09) 630 9810 ext:6 or the
Fertility Plus Embryo Donation Nurse Coordinator on (09) 630 9810
ext:3**