

Confidentiality

The counsellor will write in your medical notes that you have attended a counselling session to talk through the implications of your treatment. This is because a counselling session for couples using donor sperm is strongly recommended by medical staff.

However, anything written in the notes will only concern matters relevant to your treatment with donor sperm, and not to anything else you choose to discuss during the session.

The counsellor must use an ethical framework for good practice in counselling and psychotherapy. This is set out by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). The counsellor is also subject to its professional conduct procedure. Copies are available on request.

The Fertility Unit provides a professional counselling service to all patients at any time, before, during and after treatment.

Please telephone the Fertility Unit on 0115 970 9238 for an appointment.

Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback. If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care or treatment please speak to a member of staff or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):

Freephone: 0800 183 0204

From a mobile or abroad:

0115 924 9924 ext 65412 or 62301

E-mail: pals@nuh.nhs.uk

Letter: NUH NHS Trust, c/o PALS,
Freepost NEA 14614,
Nottingham NG7 1BR

www.nuh.nhs.uk

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet please email patientinformation@nuh.nhs.uk or phone 0115 924 9924 ext 67184.

The Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.

Implications of using donor sperm

Information for same-sex couples

Fertility Unit

This document can be provided in different languages and formats. For more information please contact:

Fertility Unit
Queens Medical Centre
B Floor, East Block
Nottingham NG7 2UH
Tel: 0115 970 9238

This leaflet is for same-sex couples wishing to pursue treatment using donor sperm.

It explains the issues that a couple may need to consider before they start treatment.

Implications of using donor sperm

The Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority (HFEA) guidelines recommend that a couple who are considering using donor sperm should have the opportunity to talk through the implications of this with an impartial counsellor who is not part of the medical team.

Counselling is not advice-giving or an assessment of your suitability as prospective parents.

The aim of counselling is to give you quiet, unhurried space to talk through your feelings about how using donor sperm may affect your life, now and in the future.

Most couples find it very helpful to have the opportunity to reflect on what they are planning. They appreciate being able to talk freely and in confidence about such important and sensitive issues.

The main issues you are invited to consider are:

- Your reasons for deciding to use donor sperm at this time.
- How did you decide which of you would be the birth mother?

- Your feelings about the potential child not being genetically part of both of you.
- How this fact may affect your relationship with the child, and with each other, now and in the future.
- Your feelings about not knowing the person who has donated their sperm to you.
- How open you are, or plan to be, with your close family and your friends about the treatment you are having.
- The advantages and disadvantages of deciding to tell, or not to tell the child about his/her origins.
- Have you considered the impact that the recent advances in DNA ancestry testing may have on you and your child?
- As they grow up children can ask difficult questions about how they came into the world. Have you thought how you might answer those questions?
- The fact that the implications of your treatment and your feelings about them may change over time and as your personal circumstances change.
- If you already have a child have you considered how using donor sperm might affect him/her?
- How might you feel if a child was born with a disability?
- If you were the child born into your family in this way, how might you feel about it? Would you want to know how you came to be?

- Do you know about the central register? Do you understand the change in the law relating to the anonymity of the donor? Are you clear about how it will affect you and your child?
- Do you know what information the child would be able to obtain about their donor?
- How you might feel if treatment fails?

Everyone responds differently to these issues and there are no right or wrong responses to them. The important thing is to have the time to think about them and explore your feelings from all angles. In this way you can be more certain that your decision is the right one.

Further information and support

British Infertility Counselling Association

www.bica.net

Fertility Network UK

www.fertilitynetworkuk.org

Donor Conception Network

www.dcnetwork.org

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority

www.hfea.gov.uk

National Gamete Donation Trust

www.ngdt.co.uk