



# Donor Sperm Handbook

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# Donor Sperm and Assisted Reproduction

## Pregnancy Using Donor Sperm

Achieving a pregnancy using donor sperm is a form of assisted reproduction, where frozen sperm is imported by Merrion Fertility Clinic from international sperm banks. The donor is chosen by you (with our help) and imported sperm is stored safely here in our clinic, until it is ready for use during your treatment.

Donated sperm can be used in a number of ways to achieve a pregnancy:

- i. Intrauterine insemination (IUI)
- ii. In vitro fertilization (IVF)
- iii. Intra Cytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI)

## Intrauterine Insemination (IUI)

- IUI involves preparing the donor sperm and placing it directly into the womb at the time of ovulation (release of an egg).
- The objective is that the sperm will reach the egg, fertilise it and go on to form a pregnancy.
- IUI may require you to take hormones to optimise and control ovulation.
- IUI with donor sperm is typically recommended for younger women (aged under 35 years) with no fertility-related issues. This includes women who:
  - Ovulate regularly
  - Have no pelvic issues
  - Have normal, patent (open) Fallopian tubes

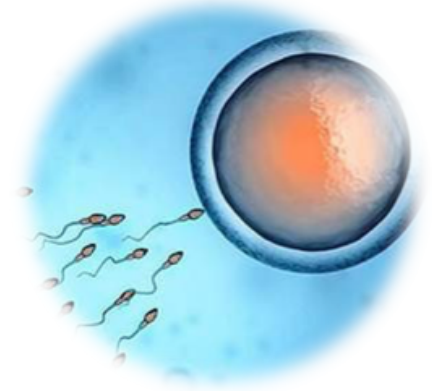
For a complete overview on IUI at Merrion Fertility Clinic, the patient handbook is available here.

[Intrauterine Insemination \(IUI\) Handbook](#)

# Donor Sperm and Assisted Reproduction

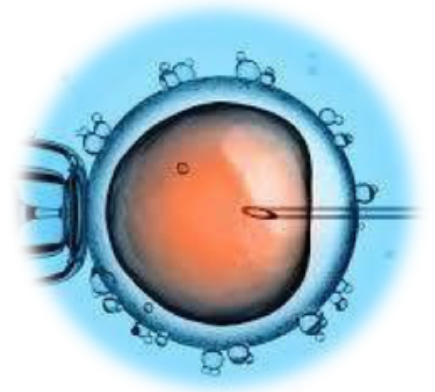
## In Vitro Fertilization (IVF)

- For women over 35 years and women who have gynaecological or fertility-related issues, IVF with donor sperm is the recommended treatment.
- IVF is a very involved treatment, comprising several stages.
- Briefly, IVF involves taking hormones to stimulate your ovaries to produce multiple eggs. You then have a procedure to remove the eggs from your ovaries, so that they can be inseminated (fertilised) with the donor sperm in our lab.
- Over the following days, the eggs will develop into embryos. One or two of these embryos will be transferred to your womb, with the hope that one will implant and go on to form a pregnancy.



## Intra Cytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI)

- If the eggs have been frozen, they must be fertilised by ICSI.
- ICSI is a technique where a single sperm is selected by an embryologist and injected into the egg. This process is repeated for each egg.
- Following fertilisation, the steps for ICSI eggs are the same as IVF eggs above.



For a complete overview on IVF/ICSI at Merrion Fertility Clinic, the patient handbook is available here.

[IVF/ICSI Handbook](#)

# Donor Sperm Treatment Cycle at Merrion Fertility Clinic

## Overview

You will be asked to attend an initial appointment with one of our doctors. Your full medical history will be taken and the process will be explained in detail.

- At this appointment, your doctor will outline the tests and investigations required to help decide which treatment option (IUI or IVF/ICSI) is best for you.
- The Doctor will also discuss our donor selection process and go through our form.

A series of screens (CMV, Rhesus, chlamydia) will be arranged by the secretary.

You will be contacted by the secretary with the results, to enable you to complete the Donor Selection Form via eConsents.

When you have completed the Donor Selection Form, the donor team will contact you about selecting and purchasing the sperm.

A second appointment with the Doctor will be arranged to discuss the best treatment pathway (IUI or IVF/ICSI) for you.

CFRA (Children's and Family Relationships Act) consent will be discussed with you at this second Doctor appointment. We will then arrange an appointment for you to complete the CFRA consent in person.

All patients must attend a counselling session to explore the implications of using donor sperm.

# Donor Sperm Treatment Cycle at Merrion Fertility Clinic

## **If your planned treatment is IUI**

Once all of the above is complete and the donor sperm is on site, your treatment can begin.

## **If your planned treatment is IVF/ICSI:**

A Pre-IVF nursing consultation is arranged.

At this appointment, the nurse completes the treatment consent with you, offers provisional treatment dates and gives you an appointment for additional investigations (for example, viral screen blood tests, BMI and blood pressure check).

Remember, the staff at Merrion Fertility Clinic are always available to answer questions, provide more information and help guide you through each phase.



# Donor Sperm Considerations

## Legal Considerations

### What You Need to Know About CFRA

The use of donor sperm must comply with the Children and Family Relationships Act (CFRA).

The main points are:

- All donors must be identifiable.
- All donors must sign the specific CFRA consent even if they are donating to a donor bank in another country.
- Your details, those of your partner (if applicable), your child and the donor must be submitted to The National Donor Conceived Persons Register.
- These details are specified in the CFRA and include names, dates of birth and contact information.
- When your child reaches the age of 18, they can access this information about their donor. This is important information to be aware of, as it may influence how and when you share information with your child about their genetic background.
- When your baby is born, we ask that you contact us at Merrion Fertility Clinic. We will then send you a document with your details (Certification for Birth Registration) which you will need to register the birth.

For more detailed information on the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015, please visit the [Government of Ireland website](#)

# Donor Sperm Considerations

## Support and Counselling

All patients considering using donor sperm must attend at least one counselling session. This is a specific type of counselling related to the use of donated eggs or sperm, called implications counselling. It is to highlight all the implications of using a donor to help create your family, such as the potential for donor siblings and where to find support if you need it as your child grows up and has questions. Merrion Fertility Clinic provides a counselling service as well as a support group.

For further information please visit:

[Merrion Fertility Clinic Counselling Services](#)

[Merrion Fertility Support Group](#)



## Selecting a Donor

There are several factors to be considered when selecting a donor. Many will be personal to you, though there are some that are important from a medical and legal perspective.

In this section, we will discuss the following factors:

- |                |                                   |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Donor banks | 4. Suitability for use in Ireland |
| 2. CMV status  | 5. Sperm donor profiles           |
| 3. Blood Type  | 6. Genetic Screening              |

# Donor Sperm Considerations

## 1. Donor banks

Merrion Fertility Clinic is licensed to import donor sperm from two Danish sperm banks:

- European Sperm Bank
- Cryos International Link

We ask that you please limit your research to these two banks. We are not licenced to import sperm from any other donor bank.



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### Sperm Sample Format

#### IUI-ready sperm

The preferred format is 'IUI-Ready' or just "IUI" sperm straw quality:

- European Sperm Bank: this is indicated on their website as "IUI".
- Cryos International: this is indicated on their website as 'IUI-Ready'; "MOT10" is sufficient for treatment.

*Note: Neither of these is an absolute requirement. Our staff will speak to you about the right type of sperm for your treatment.*

#### ICI-unwashed sperm

ICI-unwashed sperm straw quality may be permitted for your treatment. However, this will depend on the type of treatment cycle you are having.

The team at Merrion Fertility Clinic will advise you which sperm sample format is most appropriate for your treatment cycle.

# Donor Sperm Considerations

## 2. CMV Status

### What is CMV?

Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a common virus that causes few, if any, symptoms in most people.

After an infection, you will carry inactive virus in your body for the rest of your life. However, if a woman is infected by CMV for the first time during pregnancy, there can be health implications for the baby.

### What Does This Mean for Me?

- You will need to be tested to determine if you are CMV positive or negative.
- If you are CMV negative: you must choose a CMV negative donor.
- If you are CMV positive: you may choose either a CMV positive or CMV negative donor.

### Same sex couples:

For same sex couples, we suggest that both partners be tested to determine CMV status. This will be helpful if both partners want the option of using the same sperm donor or considering reciprocal IVF.



# Donor Sperm Considerations

## 3. Blood Type

### Blood Type of Sperm Donor

You do not have to limit your choice of donor based on blood type / rhesus, but it is useful information to have. However if you chose a donor based on blood type /rhesus, it may limit the donors available to you.

Blood type of donors is tested according to the following categories:

- ABO blood type (A, B, AB or O)
- Rhesus (rhesus negative or positive)

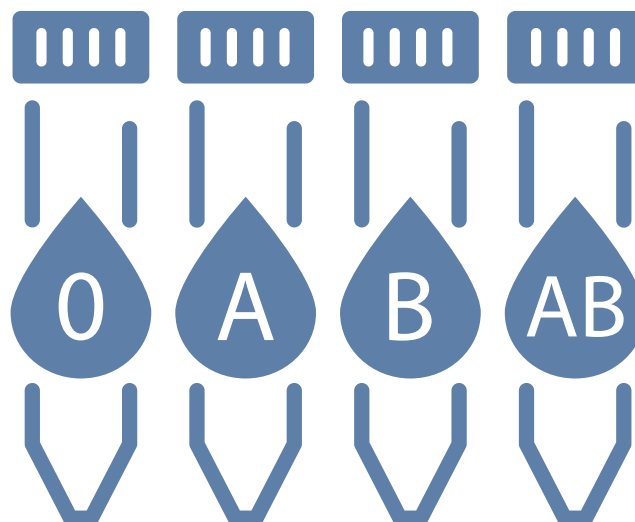
ABO blood type is not usually considered when selecting a donor though Rhesus can be.

### If your blood type is Rhesus negative (Rh-):

- You may wish to choose a Rh- donor to limit your chance of having a Rh positive child which would require you to be treated with a blood product in pregnancy.

### If your blood type is Rhesus positive (Rh+):

- You may choose either a Rh- or Rh+ donor.



# Donor Sperm Considerations

## 4. Donor Sperm Use in Ireland

There are two major criteria that determine whether donor sperm is acceptable for use in Ireland:

- I. If they have signed the CFRA consent
- II. Whether family limit has been reached

### CFRA consent

When you visit the sperm bank website, you must select Ireland as your country of residence and treatment, this is to make sure that only Irish compliant donors will be displayed to you.

### Family Limit Reached

- Donor banks used by Merrion Fertility limit the number of families created with a particular donor.
- This is to reduce the number of children born from the same donor within the same country.
- The family limit in Ireland is three for Cryos and four for ESB.
- Once the family limit has been reached, sperm from that donor will only be used to extend existing families.
- To achieve this, you must buy a "quota" with your selected donor.
- If you are unsuccessful and wish to stop using a donor you can have the fee for the quota refunded to you.



# Donor Sperm Considerations

## 5. Sperm Donor Profiles

### Basic Profile\*

This includes physical information about the donor:

1. Ethnicity
2. Hair / Eye colour
3. Height / Weight
4. Blood Group
5. CMV status
6. Certain genetic information
7. Family history

*\*This type of information must be provided, other types of information such as those provided in an extended profile are voluntary.*

### Extended Profile

In addition to basic physical information, this profile type may also include:

- Donor's hobbies
- Educational achievements
- Donor bank staff's impression of him

Inheritance of hair and eye colour is not always predictable, so while you may wish for your child to look like you or your partner (where applicable), it is impossible to accurately predict exactly what characteristics will be inherited.

## 6. Genetic Screening

This is an add on service offered by Cryos and ESB, Gene Matching or GeneXmatch respectively.

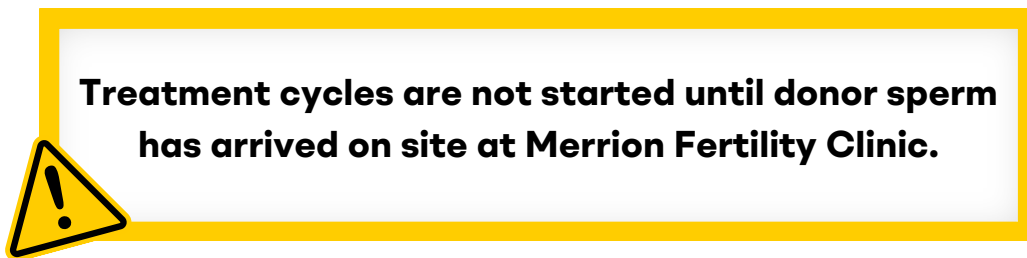
If you know you are a carrier for a recessive genetic disease, then you can find out if the donor carries that gene too before you purchase sperm from them. The donor banks are required by law to screen for the most common genetic diseases such as cystic fibrosis and thalassemia.

You can find this information on each donor in their profile. A wider test is also offered, looking at a high number of less frequent recessive genetic diseases. If you are interested in this kind of testing, we recommend you speak to your doctor.

# Ordering Donor Sperm

Below, we outline the process for ordering donor sperm through Merrion Fertility Clinic:

- Please refer to our 'Sperm Donor Selection form' to complete this process.
- Once you have researched potential donors, you must create an online account with either Cryos or European Sperm Bank and place an order online to be shipped to Merrion Fertility Clinic.
- Once your Donor sperm order has been placed, complete our Donor Selection form indicating your Donor Name/Code purchased.
- Return the completed selection form to Merrion Fertility Clinic via eConsent before the end of the calendar month.
- Number of straws:
  - if treatment with IUI is intended, it is recommended to order at least 2 straws. If treatment with IVF is intended, a single straw may be ordered.
  - Ordering can take place at any time, but sperm is shipped to MFC once a month. You will be notified once your selected sperm is safely in storage at the clinic.



## What Are the Risks of Using Donated Sperm?

- Merrion Fertility Clinic aims to provide Donor Sperm that will help you have a healthy baby. We work only with licensed reputable donor banks.
- Donor banks perform extensive screening of donors before they are approved, this includes screening for both inherited and infectious diseases.
- Despite the extensive screening performed by banks, there is no guarantee that a healthy child will be born as a result of treatment with donor sperm as it is just not possible to screen for all medical conditions.

# Ordering Donor Sperm

## Blocked Donors

- Where a donor-conceived pregnancy or child is identified as having a significant issue that is potentially hereditary and linked to the donor, this is reported to the donor bank.
- The banks will then contact clinics to inform them the donor is restricted for use until the genetic investigation is completed.
- If a significant genetic issue is confirmed, the donor will be blocked permanently. This means sperm that has already been purchased cannot be used and no refund is made of money paid. We will inform you if your donor has been blocked.
- Such blocks may also apply to embryos you have previously created using that donor's sperm. Subsequent use of these embryos will be discussed with you by a doctor.

## Self-Reporting

Self-reporting is an important step in the management of donor sperm blocks.

- If you become pregnant and any concerns arise with the pregnancy, you must notify Merrion Fertility Clinic so further communication can be relayed to the associated sperm bank.
- Similarly, any investigations or diagnosis of the donor-conceived child, at any point in their life, should be communicated to Merrion Fertility Clinic.
- This is for the safety of any potential future treatment using that donor.

# What if I Have Questions?

The staff at Merrion Fertility Clinic are here to assist you with any additional questions you may have.

- Reception: (01) 556 7900
- Contact our team through the Patient Portal.

[Patient Portal](#)



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with compassion,  
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