
Embryo donation: Information for acceptors

Medisch Centrum Kinderwens

You have contacted the MCK Fertility Center because you would like to be considered for a treatment in which you receive an embryo from a – to you – unknown woman or couple. The MCK Fertility Center is currently the only medical facility in the country offering the possibility of embryo donation.

What is embryo donation?

Embryo donation is the donation of extraneous embryos from an IVF or ICSI treatment to another couple (the acceptors). Here at the MCK Fertility Center, the embryos can be donated to people who do not have the ability to have children using their own gametes.

The Civil Code says that the woman who birthed a child is its mother, and the man who was married to the woman at the time of the birth is the child's father. This means that there is no legal familial relationship between the donors and the child; only a bio-genetic one. The donor has no rights or obligations regarding the child.

Under what circumstances will you be considered for the receipt of an embryo from our embryo bank?

Acceptors should fulfill at least one of the following criteria:

- You have no (functional) ovaries and your partner as no (functional) spermatozoa.
- IVF or ICSI has shown that a pregnancy using your own ova/spermatozoa is nearly impossible and it's not possible to conceive using donated ova or sperm.
- You do not want to conceive using your own ova and sperm because both you and your partner are carrier of a serious hereditary disease with a high risk of infecting your child.

Other conditions:

You can apply until your fortieth birthday, and your health should allow for undergoing and successfully completing a treatment. We adhere to this age constraint due to the shortage of donated embryos as well as the heightened risk of complications in pregnancies at a higher age. Because few donated embryos are available, childless women are prioritized. We'll perform the procedure no more than twice per client. All insured treatments stop on your 43rd birthday.

The procedure following application

The selection for acceptors and the embryo donation procedure follows a set protocol containing the following elements:

- a medical intake
- an intake with a fertility counselor

The medical intake

During this consultation, your eligibility for receiving an embryo (according to the above-mentioned criteria) is determined. This will be done by way of a questionnaire. Also, your health will be evaluated extensively and you'll be informed about possible risks. Pregnancies resulting from donated embryos are riskier than 'conventional' pregnancies, so we need to be certain that pregnancy won't threaten your own health.

The intake with a fertility counselor

After the consultation with your treating physician a consultation with one of our fertility counselors will be scheduled. Together, you will extensively discuss the psychosocial and societal factors playing a role in receiving donated embryos and having a child born from a donated embryo. You'll have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have, and we offer guidance during your treatment.

Using the results of these conversations, our team will decide whether you are eligible to receive embryos from the embryo bank. If we decide you are, the actual procedure can be started.

The embryo donation procedure

The embryo transfer

We'll transfer the embryo into a hormonally simulated cycle. If the transfer is successful, you'll need to use certain hormones according to a schedule we'll provide for roughly twelve weeks following the transfer. This is necessary to sustain the pregnancy. No more than one embryo will be transferred into your uterus at a time. This will be done using a thin tube, inserted into the uterine cavity through the cervix. The maximum number of donated embryo transfer attempts is two; if you conceive and carry the pregnancy to term after one attempt, a second attempt is not allowed.

Chances of a pregnancy

It's important to realize that, for each embryo transfer, the chances of a successful pregnancy are limited and that not everyone conceives, even after multiple attempts. You should not blame either yourself or your donor for failed attempts. The chances of a pregnancy are 15 to 20% for each transferred embryo.

Pregnancy itself

A pregnancy that is achieved using a donated embryo is riskier than a pregnancy achieved using your own ova. The chances of a miscarriage, high blood pressure or pregnancy poisoning are higher, and your child may weigh less than is usual in that state of pregnancy.

The follow-up of the pregnancy and your and your child's health

The MCK Fertility Center is the first center in the Netherlands to perform the embryo donation procedure, so it is extremely important for us to know the details of your pregnancy as well as your and your child's health so that we can continue to gather information and improve this procedure.

To this end, we'll approach you telephonically several times during your pregnancy to ask about both your and your child's wellbeing. In addition to this, we'll ask you to fill out a questionnaire regarding your pregnancy, childbirth and your child's development.

Information regarding the embryo donors

The MCK Fertility Center has developed a protocol for screening applicants. Embryo donors must fulfill the following criteria:

- they need to have no desire to have any (more) children of their own;
- they need to be healthy both mentally and physically;
- there can't be any hereditary afflictions in their families;
- they can't suffer from HIV or another sexually transmitted disease;
- they need to be willing to register their personal data in the national donor register.

The embryo donors are expected to report any significant changes in their health or new information regarding hereditary irregularities in their family, even after donating. If there may be consequences for your child, we'll contact you.

De Wet Donorgegevens Kunstmatige Bevruchting

According to the 'Wet Donorgegevens Kunstmatige Bevruchting' (law on Donors' Personal Details for Artificial Insemination), children born from donated embryos have the right to know the donors. When they started the donation procedure, the donors provided several personal identifying details such as name, birthdate and address. In addition to this, they gave several physical, social medical and personal traits. If a child is born from (one of) their embryos, this data is sent to the Stichting Donorgegevens. Children older than twelve can request personal non-identifying details to get a first impression of their biological roots. Children older than sixteen can request personal identifying details. More information about the legislation surrounding de 'Wet Donorgegevens Kunstmatige Bevruchting' can be found on www.donorgegevens.nl.

Costs

In principle, the medical treatments associated with the procedure (intakes, examinations et cetera) will be covered by your health insurance. Legally, three attempts at pregnancy will be restituted by your insurance company. This means that the thawing and transferring of the embryo (phase three-four of IVF) falls under insured care if you have not already declared three IVF/ICSI attempts.

The rest of the costs for the acceptors amount to 450 euros. This is a reimbursement for the expenses made: the consultations of the donors with the gynecologist and fertility counselor, the blood tests necessary for donating and the costs of the storage of the donated embryos. This money does NOT fall under insured care and you will NOT receive restitution for it.

In the Netherlands, it is forbidden to profit off selling embryos. For this reason, embryo donors won't be paid for their embryos; they will, however, receive a reimbursement of €0,19/km for travel expenses.

Contact information

Telephone: 071 5812300 (MO-FRI 08:00 a.m.- 12:00 a.m. and 01:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m. SA: 10:00 a.m.- 01:00 p.m.)

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