

Surrogacy

Surrogacy is an arrangement whereby a woman agrees to become pregnant and carry a baby for another couple. It is often the only course of action available to women who for various reasons cannot carry a baby themselves, and for same-sex male couples. There are two forms of surrogacy:

Full/host surrogacy

The Intended Parents use IVF treatment to create embryos using their own or donated sperm and eggs. The embryos are then replaced in the womb of the surrogate.

Partial/straight surrogacy

This arrangement involves the surrogate becoming pregnant by Intra-Uterine Insemination (IUI) or IVF using one of the Intended Father's sperm, with her own eggs. In this instance the child will share the surrogate's genes.

If you decide that surrogacy is the right fertility treatment for you and your partner, we will carry out fertility assessments on both of you to give you a clear idea of your chances of having a successful treatment cycle. As your gametes will be carried by a third party, both of you will be screened as if you are egg or sperm donors.

It is important to note that surrogacy is not controlled by the Human Fertilisation and Embryo Authority (HFEA). It is illegal to become a surrogate for commercial reasons, so the only payments that can be made between the Intended Parents and their surrogate are those that can be classed as reasonable expenses. As a fertility clinic we charge our usual fees for any IVF or IUI procedures that are performed.

There are organisations that can help you find a surrogate mother:

Infertility Network UK www.infertilitynetworkuk.com

Childless Overcome Through Surrogacy (COTS)
www.surrogacy.org.uk.

British Surrogacy Centre (BSC)
www.britishsurrogacycentre.com

Surrogacy UK www.surrogacyuk.org



Herts & Essex
Fertility Centre



HERTS & ESSEX FERTILITY CENTRE

Bishops' College
Churchgate
Cheshunt
Hertfordshire EN8 9XP

T: 01992 78 50 60
E: enquiries@hertsandessexfertility.com

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Same-sex parenting

Herts & Essex
Fertility Centre



Same-sex couples

We believe that any individual, irrespective of gender or sexuality, willing to make a lifelong commitment to provide a loving, nurturing, caring and supportive environment for a child has the right to become a parent. The Herts & Essex Fertility Centre is therefore proud to help same-sex couples start their family.

There are a number of fertility options for the LGBT community. These are outlined below and will be discussed in detail at your initial consultation. A preliminary fertility assessment will identify the most suitable treatment for you. Our One-Stop Fertility Assessment is a cost-effective and time-efficient way of identifying your best treatment option.

We conduct successful Egg Donation and Sperm Donation programmes at our clinic in Cheshunt and our dedicated team will care and support you throughout your treatment. As a regulated fertility clinic in the UK, it is illegal for us to recruit a surrogate mother for you. However, we can direct you to organisations who can help you, and we can perform the medical treatment you require.

Whichever route you choose, you can be assured that the treatment you receive will be delivered by experienced and caring fertility experts with the dedication that the Herts & Essex Fertility Centre is renowned for these past 25 years.

Legal rights

There are complex legal implications in conceiving with donated sperm or eggs, having fertility treatment wherein one parent contributes genetically, or by carrying someone else's baby until birth. If you are unsure of your rights as a gay parent, do feel free to call for an informal chat. If you decide to book fertility treatment, you should take expert legal advice to protect your respective rights as parents.

Counselling

We provide free sessions with Specialist Fertility Counsellors who can help you examine the implications of the journey you are about to undertake. The counsellor can also support you as treatment progresses and help you cope, whatever the outcome.

Female same-sex couples

Using donated sperm

Same-sex female couples need a sperm donor in order to fulfil their dream of becoming parents. Our clinic has an in-house Sperm Bank, and we constantly recruit new donors to offer you the widest choice of donors possible when matching your preferred characteristics. This is possible through our altruistic sperm donation campaigns and our Sperm Sharing programme.

All sperm donors undergo comprehensive screening prior to and following completion of their donation, and provide a full family medical history verified by their GP. Each donated sperm sample is frozen and quarantined for six months for HIV and released for patient use only after satisfactory re-screening. The information available for patients wishing to match themselves with a sperm donor includes: hair and eye colour, height and physique, skin tone, blood group, race and religion, as well as educational background, occupation and interests.

The process

Following initial consultation with a Fertility Specialist, you will meet a Donor Sperm Coordinator who will guide you through the test stage. You will complete a characteristics form with details of your physical characteristics and that of your partner, and your desired/preferred characteristics of the sperm donor. You will then be offered a choice of available donors based on your selection criteria.

If you require ethnic minority sperm or have very specific requests which may not be met by our in-house Sperm Bank, we can help you purchase sperm from other Sperm Banks in the UK or even import sperm from abroad.

We will guide you in the provision of your sperm donor, and offer you a personalised and supportive service to make the process stress-free as you embark on your treatment journey.

Using donated eggs or sharing your eggs

You can join our Egg Sharing programme if you need donated eggs.

Currently, Caucasian eggs are available within a couple of months, with the availability of Black or Asian eggs being variable. We are one of two top leading centres in the UK for Egg Donation treatment in terms of the number of treatment cycles performed and success rate. While the National Average is 32.4%, our current Live Birth Rate is 44.8%. The Herts & Essex Fertility Centre is one of the busiest Egg Donation Centres in the UK.

The majority of our egg donors are through our highly successful Egg Sharing programme, where you will receive half of the eggs collected from a woman who is undergoing treatment herself and who has been assessed to have the potential to produce a good number of healthy eggs to share. We also treat women who bring their own donor to the clinic.

Male same-sex couples

There are a number of ways that gay men can become fathers. The commonest option is by one partner donating his sperm to create their baby. Surrogacy treatment has become increasingly popular for gay fathers, either by using the surrogate's own eggs or by using donated eggs.

As a regulated fertility clinic we cannot help you find a surrogate, however we can guide you to organisations that can help you. We are here to support and care for you on every step of your medical treatment journey.

We have also treated lesbian couples and single women who have chosen a gay friend to donate sperm to help them have a family. As the biological father, it is an entirely personal decision how active a role you wish to play in the child's upbringing. However, your decision is best made after taking legal advice on your rights and the rights of your future child.



After months of an emotional rollercoaster, Stephen and I are delighted to announce the birth of our wonderful baby boy, Alexandre 7lbs, born on Friday 15th Nov at 09.45 We would like to thank you so much for your help during this process. You made our life complete with this little angel.

Overall, our family are delighted with this little boy and we can't thank you enough for your help. We are now looking forward to a little brother or sister next year
Stephen & Pascal