



HERTS & ESSEX FERTILITY CENTRE

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Surrogacy



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Surrogacy

Surrogacy describes the arrangement whereby a woman agrees to become pregnant and carry a baby for another couple. The woman carrying the baby is called the surrogate and the couple who will become the parents are known as the Intended Parents. Surrogacy is often the only course of action available to women who are unable to carry a baby to term themselves, and to male gay couples. This is an increasingly used fertility method for couples in the UK and the Herts & Essex Fertility Centre is happy to support couples through their surrogacy journey.

Two forms of surrogacy

Full/host surrogacy

In this scenario, the Intended Parents use IVF treatment to create embryos using their own sperm and egg. The embryos are then placed in the uterus of the surrogate. Where the treatment is successful, the Intended Parents are the genetic parents of the baby. It is also possible to use donated eggs or sperm as part of the Full Surrogacy process.

Partial/straight surrogacy

Partial surrogacy involves the surrogate becoming pregnant by artificial insemination or IVF, using the sperm from the Intended Father together with her own eggs. In this instance the child shares the surrogate's genes.

What is involved?

If you decide that surrogacy is the right fertility treatment for you and your partner, we will carry out our usual 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 surrogate we will need to screen both of you as if you are egg or sperm donors. This means that you will need to have blood tests for genetic screening as well as screening for various diseases.

It is important to note that surrogacy is regulated by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) and it is illegal to become a surrogate for commercial reasons. The only payments that can be exchanged between the



Intended Parents and their surrogate are those classed as reasonable expenses, often about £15,000. We charge our usual fees for any necessary IVF and insemination procedures. It is illegal for us, as a licensed fertility centre, to find a surrogate mother on behalf of any couple. The responsibility for finding your surrogate lies with you. However, there are organisations that can help:

Brilliant Beginnings www.brilliantbeginnings.co.uk

My Surrogacy Journey www.mysurrogacyjourney.com

Surrogacy UK www.surrogacyuk.org

We provide a counselling service for anyone involved in surrogacy to ensure you talk through all the moral and emotional implications before making a decision to continue. You will be encouraged to take time to reflect on your decision before signing the consent forms for your treatment, storage and donation as required by the HFEA, as well as a specific HFEA consent form for surrogacy.

Legal implications of surrogacy

We strongly recommend that you take legal advice before embarking on a surrogacy journey, either as would-be parents or as a surrogate. The laws surrounding surrogacy and the rights of each party are complicated.

New HFEA guidance states that:

- The surrogate will be the legal mother of the child.
- If the surrogate is married, she and her husband will be the legal parents.
- If the surrogate is not married but living with a partner, her partner can withdraw consent. The Intended Parent can be the second legal parent.

These changes do not affect the Parental Order process which transfers parenthood from the surrogate to both the Intended Parents commissioning the surrogacy arrangement.

Maternity rights

Currently the Intended Parents are not entitled to maternity leave when their child is born, only the surrogate is entitled. It is expected that this law will be addressed in 2015.

