A GUIDE TO THE
Egg Donation Select Programme

advances fertility care
Welcome to Sims

Sims IVF is the leading provider of fertility treatment to couples in Ireland since 1997. Our aim now as it was then is to bring the joy of a family to those who need help with their fertility and to help people in a professional and caring manner.

We are at the forefront of reproductive medicine and were the first to introduce gamete donation to Ireland in 2002 using egg or sperm donors. We have since built up a wealth of experience in gamete donation and continue to expand the services we offer.

Due to the continued shortage of suitable egg donors in Ireland, which caused long waiting times for patients in the past, in 2005 we introduced our Egg Donation Select Programme in partnership with Interson IVF Clinic, Ukraine.

This guide tells you about the Egg Donation Select programme and about our partner Interson IVF. You will gain new insights into egg donation and how it works.

Our Egg Donation Select programme with Intersono offers the most affordable option in Ireland with a good chance of success. The Clinical Pregnancy Rate (CPR) from our Egg Donation programmes is over 60%.

Both Sims IVF and the Egg Donation Select programme are fully licensed by the Irish Medicines Board.

We are conscious of the importance of both mind and body in the treatment of infertility. Our Mind / Body programme and specialised counselling services are critical in supporting our patients through their egg donation journey.

Egg donation may be for you, if you have exhausted other fertility options and have failed to conceive. Egg donation has a statistically higher chance of success than performing IVF with a woman’s own eggs. Couples that avail of egg donation may succeed where normal IVF has failed. We would be happy to discuss egg donation options with you. Our aim is to put a baby in your arms.

Dr. Anthony Walsh MD.
FRCOG, MRCP.
Group Medical Director and Founder

“After several failed IVF cycles, Sims IVF suggested their Egg Donation Programme to us. At first we had mixed feelings, however, having successfully completed the programme we are now the parents of beautiful twins, our lives are so complete. This was definitely the right path for us. We now have the dream we have been chasing for years. The staff at Sims IVF treated us with care and tenderness on our journey with them. We will never be able to thank them enough for everything they have done.”

(Feedback from a patient on a Sims IVF Egg Donation Programme)

List of Contents

Part 1. Choosing a Fertility Clinic
Leading the Way with Egg Donation Programmes in Ireland 2
New Beginnings Happen Every Day at Sims IVF 3
The Sims IVF Five Core Principles 3

Part 2. About the Egg Donation Select Programme
Who Benefits from Egg Donation? 6
Sims IVF Partnership with Intersono IVF Clinic, Ukraine 7
Why the Ukraine? 8
About the Donors 8

Part 3. How Egg Donation Works
The Egg Donation Select Journey 9
Stage 1. Consultation 9
Stage 2. Investigations and Counselling 10
Stage 3. Sperm Freeze 11
Stage 4. Egg Donation Select: Selecting your Donor 12
Stage 5. Donor Cycle 12
Stage 6. Fertilised Egg Transfer 12
Stage 7. Outcome 13
The Male Factor 14
The Support and Resources you Need 14
Comparison of Egg Donation Select Programme with Overseas Donor Egg Programmes 17
The difference between the Egg Donation Select and Simply Egg Donation Programmes 18

Part 4. Coming to Dublin – Our Service for Overseas Patients
10 Reasons to come to Sims IVF for Egg Donation 19

Part 5. Legal Implications of Egg Donation
How is Egg Donation Treated Legally? 20

Part 6. Questions about our Egg Donation Programme
Questions our Patients ask us. 21
Making an Appointment with Sims IVF 23

Sims IVF is licensed by Irish Medicines Board as a Tissue Establishment (TE-011)
We are officially recognised by the British Fertility Society as a training institution for reproductive endocrinology.
Leading the Way with Egg Donation Programmes in Ireland

The emotional and psychological impact of infertility can be extremely difficult. While one in six couples in Ireland encounter fertility problems, each person is unique in terms of the support, care and treatments they require. Choosing the right fertility clinic can be confusing and valuable time and money can sometimes be wasted on treatment centres that don’t have the specific know-how or expertise to explore all options fully.

45% of Sims IVF patients have already received treatment from another provider and 5% have already experienced another egg donation programme. As a result, we are experienced in caring for people whose treatment has failed elsewhere. We take pride in being able to offer hope to patients, from Ireland and abroad, with complex fertility diagnoses.

In 2005, we decided to address the unsatisfactory waiting lists for egg donation by launching an Egg Donation Programme in partnership with Intersono IVF Clinic in Western Ukraine.

Sims IVF is licensed by the Irish Medicines Board, ISO quality standard approved and complies fully with all current EU and national legislation regarding the safety and quality of tissues and cells.

For more detailed information and for a glossary of useful terms explained, please see our website: www.eggdonation.ie

New Beginnings Happen Every Day at Sims IVF

The Egg Donation Select Programme is designed to give you the optimum choice of donor and conducted to the highest standards of care possible. We provide you with the people, the resources and the expertise in egg donation to give you a positive experience.

When you come for a consultation at Sims IVF, your consultant will discuss the various fertility treatment options with you. Egg Donation may be one of those options.

If you decide to proceed to the next stage, your consultant will refer you to one of our qualified, specialist Egg Donation Co-ordinators. Our specially trained Egg Donation Co-ordinators are there to support you all along the journey from first call to final scan.

The Sims IVF Five Core Principles

Sims IVF clinic is a sanctuary - a place where respect, confidentiality and medical excellence reside. We adhere to Five Core Principles to ensure that you as a patient get the best possible care in order to maximise your chances of becoming pregnant and having a healthy baby.

1. Beat Infertility in a Safe and Caring Way
   “We have already experienced fertility treatment and this may be our last chance.”

   Patients are greeted with a warm welcome at Sims IVF. Listening to you and understanding the nature of your fertility issues is the most important first step and our comfortable facilities and specially trained staff provide a safe, highly confidential and supportive environment for patients to talk openly about their concerns.

   We genuinely believe that the support and care that we give to each of our patients, is absolutely critical. Our aim is to help patients to achieve peace of mind, no matter what the outcome. We help you in every way we can to maintain a positive focus on your relationship, your general health and your emotional well-being.

   Sims IVF operates all egg donation programmes according to strict protocols. We have obtained detailed scientific, legal, medical and independent advice in order to best protect the interests of all concerned. These stringent safeguards include medical and infectious screening as well as mandatory counselling.

   We value your time, as much as you do and we provide consultations and treatment as efficiently as possible. We have a large car park, complimentary Wi-Fi and refreshment areas. We continuously seek feedback from patients to help us improve on the services we offer.

   Our commitment is to care for you, so that you can realise your dream of having a baby.
2. Advanced Infertility Testing

“Time is not on our side, so we want to know that we can go to one clinic that has the capability and expertise to identify the root cause of our infertility problem and act fast.”

At Sims IVF, we are at the forefront in providing advanced infertility testing. We offer a number of specifically designed fertility tests that other clinics in Ireland simply do not perform – critical tests that could mean the difference between achieving a pregnancy and having an unsuccessful outcome.

**Additional tests unique to Sims IVF**

We have developed and implemented numerous advanced specialist testing techniques, some of which were first introduced to Ireland by Sims. This includes the Early Embryo Viability Assessment (Eeva™) test which has had a significantly positive impact on pregnancy rates.

Our considerable experience in testing means that we maximise the chances of success of donor egg fertilisation and implantation.

3. State of the Art Facilities

“We want to know that we will get the best resources and facilities for our treatment – technology, testing and no big waiting list.”

We have invested significantly in a state of the art clinic with excellent facilities. We have 3 operating theatres and a 5 bed ultra-sound suite to minimise waiting times. We also provide men’s private treatment facilities and 10 specially designed private recovery rooms for women. Our staff, including our specialist Egg Donation Co-ordinators, are warmly encouraging, every step of the way.

In addition, our award winning onsite medical testing partners Zentra Lab provide our patients with the most up to date testing expertise available.

Our website contains unrivalled guidance for patients with thorough explanations of the treatments we offer and step-by-step video instructions to assist with administering your medication.

4. Leaders in Reproductive Medicine in Ireland

“Having already tried a number of treatments and failed, we now need to be sure that we are getting the best treatment available in Ireland.”

We are leaders in reproductive medicine in Ireland and are responsible for the first Gamete Donation (using egg or sperm donors) programme in the country. We are also the first practitioners of Blastocyst Culture and Transfer.

In 2011, Sims IVF was the first clinic in Ireland to provide IMSI (Intracytoplasmic Morphologically-Selected Sperm Injection).

**Sims IVF provides the following infertility treatments:**

- Reproductive Immunology
- Ovulation induction and cycle monitoring
- Intra-uterine Insemination (IUI) – using partner’s sperm or donor sperm
- In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF)
- Treatment of male infertility
- Intracytoplasmic Sperm injection (ICSI)
- Intracytoplasmic Morphologically-Selected Sperm Injection (IMSI)
- Surgical sperm retrieval (TESE)
- Assisted Hatching
- Blastocyst Culture and Transfer
- Semen freezing
- Embryo Freezing and replacement
- Egg Donation

5. Excellent Results

We are Ireland’s number one clinic for IVF and our results are world-class. Many of our patients come to us because they have failed to become pregnant elsewhere, and then discover that Sims IVF offers a superior and more advanced solution than other clinics.

We have introduced many new treatment regimes in the management of our patients and have treated thousands of couples. Our donor egg programme has proved to be a resounding success and it has alleviated sub fertility for many of our patients.

Our success rates reflect our high standards and our expertise. We consistently exceed the European averages in terms of results from both IVF cycles and our donor egg programmes.

Our doctors remain at the forefront of IVF technology. We enjoy a close association with Boston IVF / Harvard Medical School. Learning from our own experience and that of our international associates we strive for excellence in the provision of reproductive medical care to those who need it.

We also provide training for medical students from the Royal College of Surgeons.

Thousands of babies have been born to Sims IVF patients since our inception at DCU in 1997.

Let us listen to your concerns and offer our expertise.

**Call the Sims IVF Egg Donation Team for a confidential consultation at +353 1 208 0710**
Egg Donation Select gives you the optimum choice of donor. You get the opportunity to select your donor from a panel of all available donor profiles.

Who Benefits from Egg Donation?

Egg donation has become an increasingly popular choice for couples who have exhausted other options and yet have still failed to conceive. This is because egg donation has significantly higher chances of success than performing IVF with the woman’s own eggs.

The resulting Clinical Pregnancy Rate is over 60%.

Women who do not produce eggs or those with poor quality eggs may be advised to seek treatment with donated eggs. Our standard policy is to offer egg donation to women less than 50 years of age.

In vitro fertilisation (IVF) involves fertilisation of a woman’s eggs with her partner’s sperm in the laboratory. The resulting embryos are placed in the womb 2-6 days later. If they implant, the embryo may develop into a pregnancy.

Unfortunately, some women are unable to provide eggs suitable for IVF. There are a number of reasons why this may occur:

- The ovaries never developed properly e.g. Turner’s Syndrome
- Premature menopause (before the age of 40)
- Ovarian damage following surgery, radiation or chemotherapy
- Previous surgical removal of the ovaries
- Repeated failure to respond to ovarian stimulation in an IVF programme
- History of recurrent miscarriage
- Where the woman is a carrier of a genetic disease, such as muscular dystrophy or haemophilia

If you are considering our Egg Donation Select Programme then we recommend that you meet with us for an initial consultation and to make an appointment to see a counsellor.

Sims IVF Partnership with Intersono IVF Clinic

Sims IVF has partnered with Intersono IVF Clinic since 2005. Intersono is a modern and leading edge IVF facility with similar characteristics to our own. We chose a clinical team of experts that we could work well with. Intersono IVF Clinic already had an existing successful door programme and they have numerous and suitable egg donors to meet our demand.

Intersono is a leading IVF Clinic in Ukraine with more than 35 highly qualified medical specialists. The clinic is located in one of the most beautiful cities in Europe – Lviv. The clinic recently moved to brand new premises, with sophisticated treatment facilities on par with the best in Europe. The team have considerable expertise in IVF treatment carrying out over 500 cycles per year.

They have quality management systems (QMS) that comply with ISO 9001:2008 requirements (certificate first gained in 2004).

Those involved in the Egg Donation Select programme at Intersono speak English. Each doctor and embryologist has been trained by and works closely with Sims IVF in Dublin. Each member of the Intersono medical team works to Sims IVF protocols and standards, including adhering to the regulations issued by the EU Tissues and Cells Directives. We have taken every step possible to ensure that our protocols and standards are mirrored by Intersono. We have been very satisfied with the standards provided by our partner in Ukraine.

Importantly, a clinical staff member from Sims IVF always travels to the Ukraine with the sperm and back with the embryos, for security reasons.

The Sims IVF and Intersono IVF dedicated medical teams have weekly teleconference calls to discuss cases, processes and procedures.
Why the Ukraine?

In Western Europe the number of recipients outstrips the number of available egg donors. The reverse is true in Eastern Europe where couples tend to have their families at a younger age, and are therefore in a position to consider donating eggs. The trend for people in Western Europe is to have children later; in their thirties and they are usually too old to consider donating by the time their families are complete. This explains why we have established a partnership with Intersono, located in Eastern Europe.

About the Donors

You, as a recipient couple, can choose your egg donor from a pool of donors. This is not the case with many other international clinics, where the donor is chosen for you. Our donors have proven fertility, which means they have their own family.

Importantly, the eggs that are donated for your particular cycle are exclusively reserved for you as the recipient. Eggs retrieved from a donor are, therefore not split between a number of other recipients; they are donated for the use of a specific recipient. The eggs that are donated for your treatment cycle are exclusively reserved for your use.

Our pool of egg donors come forward voluntarily because of a desire to help others. There is no incentive other than compensation for expense, inconvenience and risks involved in the procedure.

Egg donors must be fit and healthy and between the ages of 18 and 35 years. The donors are screened for problems relating to family health history and transmissible infectious diseases and must consent to their eggs being donated. Each donor goes through a triple testing regime as follows:

- **Initial donor assessment**
  - A blood test is taken and analysed for all major illnesses including HIV, Syphilis, Hepatitis and Cystic Fibrosis. The donor is accepted onto the programme only if the results are normal or negative.
  - **Screening at time of donation (30 days)**
    - A second screening takes place for illnesses including HIV, hepatitis and syphilis. Donation only takes place if all results of tests are negative.
  - **PCR on day of donation**
    - A third screening takes place on the day of donation for HIV; Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. Embryos will be released for shipment on receipt of negative results.

This is the highest standard of screening possible and our testing regime is being recommended for use throughout the rest of Europe. As a recipient, triple testing is vital, giving you peace of mind.

The donor receives a psychological evaluation and counselling before her eggs are removed for the purposes of egg donation. The egg donors understand that the main objective of the medical procedure is to enable another female recipient to carry and deliver a child that they could not otherwise conceive.

All treatment is confidential and anonymity is assured for both parties. The Egg Donation Select Programme provides you with detailed donor profiles including physical characteristics, family history and education. However, identifying information about the donor will not be made available to you, or to any child resulting from treatment. The donor will not be provided with any information about you, and will not have any right to access information about any child resulting from the treatment.

Importantly, neither the donor nor the partner of the donor has any claim on or obligation towards any resulting children. This means that you and your partner are deemed to be the sole parents and guardians of the child and your names are on the child’s birth certificate.

Part 3. How Egg Donation Works

1. The Egg Donation Select Journey

The Egg Donation Journey at a Glance

There are seven stages in the Sims IVF Egg Donation Select Journey. These stages are: Consultation, Investigations and Counselling, Sperm Freeze, Donor Selection, Donor Cycle, Fertilised Egg Transfer and then your Outcome

With Egg Donation Select you get to choose your donor from a pool of available donor profiles.

Stage 1 – Consultation

When you come for a consultation at Sims IVF, our aim is to help you to conceive and experience the joy of having a family. Your Sims IVF consultant will discuss the various fertility treatment options with you.

Egg Donation may be one of those options and this depends on your:

- AMH levels
- Previous fertility treatment
- Medical history.

When recommending egg donation as an option, your Sims IVF consultant will brief you on:

- The egg donation programme options available
- Risks associated with egg donation
- Risks associated with fertility treatment

If you decide to proceed to the next stage, your doctor will refer you to one of our qualified Egg Donation Co-ordinators.

Consulting with your Egg Donation Co-ordinator

Our Egg Donation Co-ordinators are nurses with specialist expertise in egg donation. Your Egg Donation Nurse Co-ordinator guides you through the programme with as much care and support as possible.

- They explain the programme
- Answer your questions
- Provide treatment time-frames
- Take you through the process step-by-step
- Ensure that you are confident in your decision and fully prepared to proceed.

Our Sims IVF Egg Donation Co-ordinators have a particularly sensitive and empathetic approach to their work. Entirely dedicated to our egg donation programmes, our Co-ordinators will be your link to Sims, and will do everything in their power to care for you and ensure that you are supported and informed throughout the process.

Consent Forms are part of your consultation process

Before you commence treatment at Sims IVF, both you and your partner must sign an Egg Donation Consent Form.

The Egg Donation Select Consent Forms are given to you by your Egg Donation Co-ordinator. You will have time to read and study the form during your investigations and you will get the opportunity to discuss your concerns.

Consent forms highlight and invite you to consider all potential outcomes and complications. Your Egg Donation Co-ordinator talks you through the forms, and provides you with a copy to bring home as the consent requires both time and consideration.
The areas covered in the Consent Forms include:

- Investigation plan (DNA and SA Freeze)
- Screening (EU Cell and Tissue Directive)
- Mandatory Counselling
- Timeframe of your treatment plan
- Egg Donation Select programme cost options
- Paying for your programme
- Possible surplus embryo freezing
- Donor matching
- Risks associated with egg donation including shipping, cross infection
- Anonymity – currently protected by law
- Risks of failure
- Risks to the child – hereditary diseases
- Multiple births

Once you understand the process, the risks and the options available, you can sign the Consent Forms.

You must return the signed copy to Sims IVF prior to beginning any treatment.

Stage 2 – Investigations and Counselling

What tests do we have to go through?

There are a number of standard tests required and your Egg Donation Co-ordinator will make sure you are properly informed about these. Here is a synopsis of the tests required:

**Bloods and reproductive immunology screening**

It is important to do blood tests for rubella immunity, hormone levels, and what we call infectious screening. Infectious screening includes tests for HIV/VDRL and Hepatitis B and C and HTLV 1&2.

**Semen analysis**

We provide a comprehensive semen analysis service at Sims IVF to ensure that the best possible sperm sample is used in your cycle, maximising your chances of success. If you have already had semen analysis at Sims within the past year you will not be required to repeat this stage.

**Saline Infusion Sonography and trial stimulation to assess womb lining**

A standard test called a saline sonography will be conducted. It’s performed to assess two major factors of success in treatment; the ease of transfer and how normal the inside the womb is. Doing a mock transfer beforehand ensures (i) the embryos can be put in as gently as possible and into the correct location in the uterus. Finally, at the same time a mock transfer (ii) checks that the inside of the womb is normal and that there are no fibroids or polyps which might reduce the chance of an individual embryo implanting and reducing the success of pregnancy.

If you have already had a SIS at Sims IVF within the last 12 months then you will not be required to repeat this test.

**Implications Counselling**

Implications counselling is a mandatory legal requirement for all couples wishing to avail of egg donation. Counselling is critical for both of you, before the treatment begins. Counselling helps you to deal with the various questions and concerns that come up for you some of which you may not have considered before.

Sims IVF provides resident counsellors who are familiar with the complex issues involved in engaging in the egg donation programme. They are conscious of the various nature of the procedure and the implications of a treatment that is relatively unconventional. They can help you to deal with emotional issues and concerns that will inevitably arise.

The results of these tests and investigations are reviewed by your Egg Donation Co-ordinator and your doctor. Subject to the results you are signed off to go ahead.

Stage 3 – Sperm Freeze

**Arranging the Sperm Freeze & Consents Appointment**

Consents. At this appointment you will meet with a trained donor coordinator who will go through the consent forms with you that you will have already studied and partially signed. Our nurse will highlight the main risks associated with the programme in addition to them being described in the consent. You will have an opportunity to ask questions and once you are happy to proceed and sign off on the consent form your semen freeze procedure may take place.

**Semen Freeze**

A semen freeze should be carried out following 2-3 days of abstinence from intercourse or masturbation. Shorter or longer periods of abstinence impede optimum results and so you should stick to our recommendation. Sperm samples are analysed before they are frozen in addition to a test thaw procedure prior to shipment to ensure the sperm thaws normally. Usually only one semen sample is required to be frozen but this does depend on the sperm quality and you will be advised by the embryologists if a subsequent sample is required.

Frozen sperm transported to our partner clinic

The sperm travels out in a special vessel which ensures it is maintained at the appropriate conditions. We understand the importance of this part of the programme and that it proceeds without any risk to the samples and as such work with specialist couriers with experience transporting these important samples. As such, your samples are accompanied at all times until they are delivered safely to the laboratory staff at our partner clinics.

As soon as investigations are complete and the sperm has been frozen, the donor allocation process begins.
**Stage 4 - Egg Donation Select: Selecting your Donor**

How do we select our donor.

This is an exciting phase in the process and the Egg Donation Select option gives you the best choice and insight possible.

You are given a username and password unique to you so that you can log on in the privacy of your own home and review a number of donor profiles. We aim to have up to 20 profiles available to you to choose from.

You can filter the available donors by hair colour, eye colour and blood group which may help you narrow your decision.

You are allocated a specific time period on the portal and no other couples are permitted to look online at the time that you are choosing your egg donor.

Once you have made your choice, then we contact our partner clinic to inform them. Our work with our partner clinic commences.

**Stage 5 - Donor Cycle**

How exactly does the donor cycle work?

The donor’s cycle is planned using medications so that we know approximately what date her egg collection will take place and when the shipment of embryos back to Sims IVF. This allows us to work with you to plan your treatment.

**Egg Retrieval**

Eggs are retrieved from a donor by means of vaginal ultrasound guided aspiration of ovarian follicles. This involves the introduction of a specially designed needle through the vaginal wall under local anaesthesia and intravenous sedation.

There is a small possibility that the donor may not respond to her treatment and therefore no eggs become available. Thankfully this happens rarely but if no eggs are available, the hormones are stopped and another donor is found as soon as possible.

Your Egg Donation Coordinator will let you know how many eggs were obtained. A process called ICSI then takes place. ICSI involves injecting a single sperm into each egg using a very fine needle, rather than mixing the eggs and sperm in a dish.

Fertilised eggs are frozen at what we call the 2PN stage by a process called slow-freezing and before being shipped with a specialist courier back to Sims IVF:

**Stage 6 - Fertilised Egg Transfer**

How does the Embryo Transfer Work?

After fertilisation, you are informed of arrangements for embryo transfer. Once the fertilised embryos are confirmed, preparation of the female recipient begins. This is organised by your Co-ordinator. A month long treatment schedule is set up and a prescription for special medication is given to the woman to help prepare her womb.

We want to ensure that the embryos are placed in the womb at the optimal time for implantation. This is achieved initially by starting on the contraceptive pill for a short period. Then a nasal spray is used to make the ovaries inactive. This is known as down regulation. Some women requiring donor eggs do not menstruate and therefore may not need the spray. Once down regulation has been achieved, hormone tablets are taken daily to prepare the lining of the womb to receive the embryos.

Ultrasound scans are carried out following commencement of the hormone tablets so that the doctor can assess your womb lining to ensure that it is the right thickness for embryo transfer. If the womb lining is satisfactory, an additional hormone - Progesterone - is taken as advised. This ensures that the lining of your womb is in the best possible condition for implantation of the embryos.

The Embryos are thawed and cultured to day 5 or 6 to what we call the blastocyst stage in preparation for transfer into the uterus. They are replaced through the neck of the womb using a small plastic tube. This is usually a painless procedure rather like having a cervical smear test and it takes 5–10 minutes to perform. Normally we will transfer up to two blastocysts. If you are fortunate enough to have more than two blastocysts, then we will freeze these for future use.

Following embryo transfer, the hormone tablets and Progesterone medication are continued daily as indicated in your treatment schedule. These hormones reflect the changes that normally occur in a woman’s body at this time. While the hormone supplements are being given, a period will not usually occur, but this does not necessarily mean pregnancy has begun. Two weeks after the embryo transfer, a blood test is carried out to establish whether you are pregnant. If this is positive, a scan is performed three weeks later to ensure that the pregnancy is inside the womb and that a foetal heartbeat can be seen. Hormone supplements continue until at least week 12 of pregnancy.

**Stage 7 - Outcome**

You will be asked to perform a urine pregnancy test at home on a specific date, 12 days after your blastocyst transfer. We recommend you use either Clear Blue or First Response testing kits as they are capable of detecting early pregnancies.

Confirming Pregnancy

Pregnant. If your home pregnancy test is positive you will be asked to attend the clinic for a confirmatory blood test that lets us know how pregnant you are. Depending on the result you may be asked to come back and repeat this test a few days later. When the positive result has been confirmed your Co-ordinator will advise you about your medication and early pregnancy care, and will book you in for your first obstetric scan at six
weeks. Your Co-ordinator will offer guidance and support throughout the first 12 weeks of pregnancy until your care is referred to an obstetrician.

**Not Pregnant?**

Although our pregnancy rate is high there is no guarantee of a positive outcome. If the result of your home pregnancy test is negative, your Co-ordinator will offer you the option of a confirmatory blood test so that you can be sure of the result.

**The Male Factor**

The egg donation programme is very much dependent on both you and your partner, for its success. As a man, you may want to take into consideration the factors that can inhibit conception. Factors that could significantly reduce your chances of success are:

- Abnormal sperm test (on sperm analysis or DNA fragmentation test)
- Being a smoker
- Being over 40 years of age

As a team, we at Sims IVF will do our best to help you to maximise your chances of conceiving a healthy child.

**The Support and Resources You Need**

**Online Patients Resource Area**

We have set up a Patients Resource Area on our website: [www.eggdonation.ie](http://www.eggdonation.ie) to give you guidance through your treatment. This resource gives you useful information including frequently asked questions, video demonstrations on how to take injections and any forms that you need to fill out.

The Patients Resource Area is unique to patients of Sims IVF and was developed based on patient feedback and insights.

**Counselling**

Any fertility treatment is very emotional and egg donation is no different. For most couples, the most difficult time is not the technical period, but the waiting involved. Most couples tend to overestimate the technical demands of fertility treatment and underestimate the emotional demands.

Sims IVF offer a range of counselling services. This is booked directly through reception. Counselling available includes: Therapeutic Counselling for individuals or couples. Counselling if a patient experiences a negative outcome and/or Implications Counselling, for patients requiring the use of donor sperm or donor eggs (mandatory).

Implications Counselling offers a service to recipient patients where they can express issues and feelings about proposed egg or sperm donation. Issues specific to donor-conception are explored, such as, disclosure versus non-disclosure to family, friends or anyone else who may be affected by such treatment, either in the present or in the future. It also provides a therapeutic space for the patient to reflect on the experience of letting go of the hope of having a genetically shared child and the meaning of building a family with donation. The issues of identifiable versus non-disclosure to family, friends or anyone else who may be affected by such treatment, either in the present or in the future.

**Mind / Body Programme**

**Our Mind / Body programme is available to you in conjunction with our medical care and the programme aims to alleviate some of the stress involved with IVF treatment. The Mind / Body programme has been shown to improve the chances of conceiving, particularly on a second or third IVF opportunity.**

Research has shown that dealing with a pharmacy that is experienced in the area of prescribed fertility medication can assist in the success of the treatment. The reasons for this are simple: a pharmacy that is well briefed on the types and stock levels of medication required, the issues involved and the back-up service needed for patients will deliver a better service to our patients.

We recommend that you procure your medication from specialist pharmacies with specific training and expertise in IVF and fertility medication. Sims can provide you with a list of these.

**Referral by your GP or Gynaecologist**

If you have been referred to Sims IVF by your doctor or gynaecologist, it is our policy to keep them informed of your progress. If not, we will stay in contact with your GP, unless it is your express wish that we do not. We believe that you ought to be given as much support as possible when undergoing fertility treatment and that your doctor can help you to manage your treatment.

**Medications**

Once you have agreed to initiate treatment, you will be given a prescription for medications.

We recommend that you procure your medication from specialist pharmacies with specific training and expertise in IVF and fertility medication. Sims can provide you with a list of these.

Mind/Body Programme training is a one day stress reduction programme incorporating Cognitive Behavioural techniques (CBT), Mindfulness based stress reduction, Restorative Exercise, Nutritional therapy and acupuncture for fertility support. Patients receive a Mind/Body Programme brochure and CDs/Books to support them throughout their treatment and beyond.
Any experienced pharmacist can also provide the necessary guidance to ensure that you are clear on when and how to take your various medications.

Of course, patients may use a pharmacy of choice unless the consultant specifically recommends otherwise for professional reasons. We can also give you details of pharmacies that can provide a 24/7 service to support your needs.

**Drugs Payment Scheme**

If you are an Irish resident, fertility medications are covered under the DPS (Drug Payment Scheme). The maximum cost of the DPS payment is currently €14 per month, although this is subject to change.

To qualify for the scheme and to get the latest updates on your entitlements, you can apply to your Health Board. Forms are available from any pharmacy.

**Private Health Insurance**

Some of the major healthcare providers cover aspects of fertility treatment. It is possible that they may cover consultations and / or some investigations or tests. For more information, contact your health insurance company directly.

**Tax Relief**

Keep all invoices as these are tax deductible and it may be possible to reclaim them under the Med 1 scheme. Further information and forms are available at www.revenue.ie

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**Comparison of Egg Donation Select with Overseas Donor Egg Programmes**

If you are thinking about going abroad for Donor Egg Programmes, here are key elements that are worth considering.

1. **Look for an all inclusive package.** Hidden costs can add thousands of euro to your overall bill.

2. **Make sure that you get the best service that you can in terms of testing, treatment and follow-up.**

3. **Many clinics do not give you all of the eggs retrieved from your appointed donor – they are split with other couples.**

4. **Donor medications and supports may not be included in your quoted price, and these could add considerably to your bill at a later date.**

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**The Sims IVF Egg Donation Select Package**

Our egg donation Co-ordinators will be happy to go through the elements of the Egg Donation Select package with you at any time.

**Our package includes**

- All routine blood testing
- All laboratory costs including semen analysis, semen freeze, ICSI and Blastocyst Culture
- Storage costs of any frozen embryos for a period of one year
- Recipient Transfer Cycle
- Donor costs
- Donor medications
- One to one donation, meaning that eggs retrieved from the donor for your cycle are entirely yours and not split between you and other recipients
- Shipment of gamete and embryos, saving you the cost of travel, accommodation and time off work
- Implications Counselling

Most overseas clinics do not include semen analysis. They may not include semen freeze and they may not include ICSI, or Blastocyst culture. These additional services, provided as part of your package from Sims IVF, could make all the difference in successfully conceiving a child.

It is also important to note that the costs for the donor including counselling, and other payments may be allocated to you separately by the overseas clinic and that these costs could be significant. Again, we include all donor costs in our quote to you.
The difference between the Egg Donation Select and Simply Egg Donation Programmes

We know that our patients have different priorities and concerns and so we have chosen to develop two distinct egg donation programmes to give you more options when selecting the treatment plan most suited for you.

1. Donor Allocation v Donor Selection

Simply Egg Donation: You get to choose between two donors allocated to you by the donor allocation team, based on physical characteristics.

Egg Donation Select: You are given access to a number of donor profiles, and select the donor you want yourself.

Some of our patients like to select their own donor, but some patients have found the decision very stressful, and would prefer to have the selection made by an experienced team.

2. Donor Profiles

Simply Egg Donation: You are provided with basic characteristics of the donor: eye and hair colour, height and weight. You also receive information on each of the donor’s hobbies, personality traits, and level of education.

Egg Donation Select: The donor profile is much more detailed, including physical characteristics, family history and education. Many patients want to know as much about the donor as possible, and appreciate the extra information, but others prefer for the donor to remain anonymous, once they are physically similar.

3. Proven Fertility

Simply Egg Donation: Most donors have proven fertility but not all.

Egg Donation Select: All donors have proven fertility.

Proven fertility means that they have already had a child of their own, or have previously donated successfully. It is important to remember that previous success is a good indication of fertility, but not a guarantee.

4. Number of Embryos/Blastocysts

Simply Egg Donation: Embryos are grown to blastocyst stage before being shipped to Ireland. Recipients are guaranteed at least one blastocyst for transfer.

Egg Donation Select: A minimum of 8 2PN embryos will be brought back to Sims, and then grown out to blastocyst stage. Not all the embryos may survive to blastocyst stage.

Both programmes guarantee the patient a blastocyst transfer; but there are no guarantees there will be anything to freeze.

5. Cost

For details of our packages and costs for both the Egg Donation Select and Simply Egg Donation programmes, visit our website: www.eggdonation.ie

Part 4. Coming to Dublin – Our Service for Overseas Patients

Patients from the UK and other countries outside Ireland

If you are travelling to Sims IVF from outside Ireland, we will endeavour to minimise the number of times you must travel to Dublin by carrying out as much testing and treatment as is appropriate at each of your visits to us. For example, you may see the consultant fertility doctor, the Egg Donation Programme Co-ordinator and the Counsellor on your first visit. Usually on that day, we can also carry out your blood tests, saline infusion Sonography (SIS), semen analysis and freeze.

Once your initial consultation is complete, you will generally find that you only need to travel to Ireland for treatment, because the embryos come to the recipient rather than the other way round. Most other procedures such as follow-up scans can usually be done locally. Travel requirements are kept to a minimum, for couples joining the Egg Donation Programme from abroad. We have a partnership with the Lister Fertility Clinic in the UK, so that if you are a UK resident, all of your screening investigations can be carried out at a Lister Clinic, instead of coming to Ireland.

Two visits to Sims IVF are required; one for the semen freeze and the other for embryo transfer.

For patients outside of the UK, the initial consultation can be carried out either in person or by phone with a Sims IVF Consultant. Once the arrangements are put in place by one of our Egg Donation Co-ordinators, the next step is to ensure that the appropriate infectious screening blood tests have been carried out and arrangements are made for sperm freezing at Sims IVF.

Usually there is a requirement for no more than two visits to the clinic in Dublin. However, the number of visits does depend on scanning, counselling and laboratory work being carried out by an approved local IVF clinic in your location.

Clearly there are individual aspects of care for your case that will alter according to your circumstances. These should be discussed with the Sims IVF Consultant or with one of the Egg Donation Co-ordinators to make the process as simple and straightforward as possible.

10 Reasons to come to Sims for Egg Donation

1. We can offer you a choice of two distinct egg donation programmes
2. The donor you select is exclusive to you for that particular cycle, meaning you get all of her eggs
3. We offer anonymous donation
4. Costs are all-inclusive
5. Our success rates are above the EU average
6. Sims IVF provides ICSI and Blastocyst transfer as a routine part of this programme. Many international clinics are unable to offer this service
7. No waiting lists to come onto our programme
8. Patients only have to travel to Dublin for treatment, which keeps your travel costs relatively low
9. All our staff are English speaking
10. You get a dedicated, personal service from our Egg Donation Programme Co-ordinators.

www.eggdonation.ie
Part 5. Legal Implications of Egg Donation

How is Egg Donation Treated Legally?

The following information is the Sims IVF interpretation of legal advice that we received regarding egg donation. It is not a substitute for legal advice regarding your own particular circumstances or planned treatment. We recommend that you obtain independent legal advice if you plan to embark on treatment through our egg donation programmes.

- Gamete (Egg or Sperm) donation is legal and constitutional under Irish law. Gamete donation began in Ireland as sperm donation. It has been available in Ireland for over 30 years. Egg donation became available in Ireland in 2000. There has been no adverse case law to date.

- Under Irish law, the rights of the donor are protected up until the act of donation occurs. After that takes place, the law protects the recipient’s rights.

- If a donor tried to track down a child, she would have to overturn a number of points of law:
  - The fact that legally the mother would be interpreted as the birth mother under Irish law.
  - The fact that the donor would be in breach of the Data Protection Act 1988, whereby information relating to the child or the commissioning parents cannot be given to others without their consent.
  - It would be a breach of contract law - because the donor gave up her rights to the egg and to any born child.
  - It would also be a breach of the constitutional rights of the recipient couple. Under the McGee verdict 1973, a couple have a constitutional right to expand or limit their family as they wish. This legislation results in four specific legal protections for a recipient. A donor is informed very clearly that when they donate, they give up all rights to the eggs and to any children born of those eggs. Equally, they have no responsibility for such children.

- If you are located outside Ireland and the UK, then the laws of your jurisdiction will apply.

Other legal aspects to consider

- Currently, under Irish law, donors are allowed to remain absolutely anonymous.

- While it has been recommended in the past that Ireland should follow the UK example, this would only apply in prospect, not retrospect and it would take some years to enact the legislation in this country. It is unlikely to affect couples in the foreseeable future.

Informing your Child

The important thing is that if you are a prospective parent, under an egg donation programme, it is important to give careful consideration to the decisions you will have to make when it comes to informing your child or not. You may find that you change your mind over time.

You and your partner will get the opportunity to discuss this issue and many more during your counselling sessions.

Part 6. Questions about our Egg Donation Programme

Questions our patients ask us

Q1. What is the timescale from starting to completion of a donor egg cycle?

A1. The timetable is usually 4-6 months from initial consultation. It is dependent on donor recruitment and a number of other factors.

Q2. Are there donors available and what information is made available to us?

A2. Yes, there are donors available. The Egg Donation Select programme provides non-identifying, generic type information on them through the Sims IVF online portal. This information includes hair colour, eye colour, blood group, and a brief summary of physical attributes and personality characteristics.

Q3. Is there independent verification of the samples during this treatment?

A3. As with any fertility treatment involving sperm and eggs, there are established clinical and laboratory systems for verification. These principles of good laboratory practice apply both in Ireland and in Europe.

Q4. What are the overall clinical pregnancy rates?

A4. The success rates of the Sims IVF Egg Donation programme exceed the European average at over 60% Clinical Pregnancy Rate per transfer.

Q5. Are the European Egg donors paid?

A5. Donors are compensated for expenses incurred and for their time

A6. For similar reasons as to why Irish women donate – altruism plays a significant part. This is particularly the case for donors who have had children of their own and therefore understand the pleasure that children and family life can bring.

Q7. What led you to choose the clinic you are working with in the Ukraine?

A7. In partnering with Intersono IVF, we chose a modern, cutting edge IVF facility, similar to our own clinic. We ascertained that we could work well with the team there, and that they already had an existing donor programme and suitable egg donors available.

Questions our patients ask us (continued over >)
You also get to select your own
All donors are of proven fertility, they are
Secondly, unlike many other European
A10. There are a number of specific benefits
Q9. Can you tell me about infectious
A9. There is a triple testing process in place
for all donors. This involves screening
at three separate points during the
donation process for HIV, Hepatitis B and C. In addition, the donors are
screened for Hepatitis A, Chlamydia,
Gonorrhoea and Syphilis. Whilst not
infectious, all donors are also screened
for Cystic Fibrosis and Karyotyping.
Q10. How does the Egg Donation
Select Programme compare to
programmes in Europe?
A10. There are a number of specific benefits
to this programme. Firstly there is less
travel involved for recipients which helps to reduce the stress and the
expense of treatment.
Secondly, unlike many other European
programmes that split the eggs from
one donor between two or more recipients, ours is a one-to-one
donation where all eggs retrieved in a cycle are allocated to one
commissioning recipient couple.
We have also incorporated Blastocyst
culture and transfer to further improve
the results and we conduct DNA Fragmentation testing in our laboratory
at Sims IVF in Dublin.
Finally, with regard to costs, the overall
cost of the programme is all inclusive
and also covers another embryo
transfer in the event that your first
transfer is negative and where there
are surplus embryos frozen.
Finally, the overall cost of the
programme is all-inclusive.
Q11. If this treatment does take place
in Ireland, there will presumably
not be a fresh embryo transfer. Will
this factor reduce the chance of
success for us?
A11. No. The transfer is a frozen Blastocyst
transfer following thawing of the
embryos. Frozen blastocyst transfers
are routinely carried out in IVF centres
worldwide with good success rates.
Recent research indicates that they
are just as successful as fresh embryo
transfers. This should not impact the
chances of success for you.
Q12. If I am interested in considering
this programme what is the
next step?
A12. Contact Sims IVF; there are full contact
details on the back of this guide. You
will immediately be referred to our
Egg Donation Co-ordinators who will
schedule an initial appointment with
one of our Consultants.

Making an appointment
with Sims IVF

It is the policy of the clinic to see a couple
or an individual for an initial consultation
with the consultant before they have
treatment. This consultation is important as
it is the first tool the doctor uses in assessing
patients. It is of benefit to you as a patient
that copies of any test results, record of
investigations or treatment summaries are
brought with you to the consultation. As
some tests only have a certain validity period
it may be the case that various tests may have
to be repeated, although we do not do so as
a matter of routine.

It is preferable that both the female and male
partner are present, as infertility is a shared
condition and both parties should be involved
in all aspects of the decision making process.
It is also more beneficial to a couple as they
may well be hearing new information which is
together first hand. Bloods or other preliminary investigations may be
carried out on either the male and/or female
at this first visit.

You should allow approximately one to
two hours for your appointment. Normally
you will see the doctor and then an Egg
Donation Programme Co-ordinator who
will co-ordinate your investigations and/or
treatment. The duration and structure of
the appointment varies depending on your
condition and your medical requirements
as no two couples are the same. You will be
advised after the consultation to book for a
phone consultation with your doctor for a
months’ time. This will enable the doctor to
discuss the results of any investigations or
tests recommended for you and discuss any
adjustments that may need to be made to
your treatment plan.

We endeavour to see each couple at the
agreed appointment time. However, in the
medical environment, patient’s medical
needs change and delays may occur. It is
recommended that you arrive at least twenty
minutes before your appointment to register.
If you would like to make an appointment,
click on the make an appointment icon on

It is likely that you may wait several weeks
for your initial consultation; this is because we
limit our intake of new patients allowing more
space to manage those patients attending for
initial consultation. A rapid diagnosis and subsequent
treatment is particularly crucial for the likely
causes of patient infertility, within a short time
frame. Once you are on the programme,
there are no treatment waiting lists.
If you are already an existing patient of
Sims IVF, appointments for semen analysis,
consultation, testing and ultrasound scans can
be made by phone or by email.

For more detailed information
and for a glossary of useful terms
explained, please see our website:
www.eggdonation.ie
Sims IVF clinic is a sanctuary - a place where respect, confidentiality and medical excellence reside.
Contact us
For full details about our Simply Egg Donation Programme

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Clonskeagh Road
Clonskeagh
Dublin 14
Ireland

tel 1800 497 777
+353 (0) 1 208 0710
email edenurses@sims.ie
web www.eggdonation.ie

Directions to the Sims IVF Clinic are also available on our website.

For more copies of A Guide to the Egg Donation Select Programme, please contact us at 1800 497 777 or +353 1 208 0710

Sims IVF is licenced by Irish Medicines Board as a Tissue Establishment (TE-011)
Sims IVF is a training institute of The Royal College of Surgeons