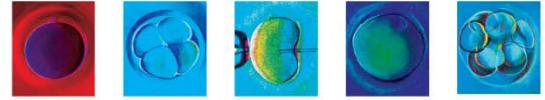


Louis Weckstein, MD
Susan Willman, MD
Mary Hinckley, MD
Deborah Wachs, MD
Carmelo Sgarlata, MD
Evan Rosenbluth, MD
Kristen Ivani, PhD



FERTILITY FACT SHEET

San Ramon / Orinda / San Jose

Shared Egg Donor Program

The Shared Egg Donor Program is offered to RSC patients to provide a more affordable treatment cycle with egg donation. The cost of an egg donor cycle is high, making it difficult for many women to afford. The costs of egg donation continue to rise due to increased costs of donor screening as required by the FDA and due to increasing competition for donor reimbursement. Many egg donors produce more eggs than a single recipient needs. As a result, many extra embryos are frozen and never used or are discarded. In our experience, most egg donors produce enough eggs to share between two recipients. The average number of mature eggs recovered is 10-15. Excellent pregnancy rates are achieved with 5-8 eggs. Therefore, the most efficient use of egg donors would be to split the eggs between two recipients.

Shared Donor Selection

Only donors who meet stringent screening requirements are designated as Shared Donors. Prior cycles are evaluated for the number of eggs retrieved, the number of blastocyst embryos produced, and the pregnancy outcome of the cycle. Only egg donors who have had high numbers of eggs and embryos in a previous cycle and an ongoing pregnancy resulting from that cycle can be selected as Shared Donors. The past performance of a donor is a good predictor of her response in a future cycle. Most donors who have a high response in their first cycle will have a similar response in future cycles. Shared cycles will be split between two recipients.

Recipient Assignment

Recipients who choose to participate in the Shared Egg Donor Program will select from the donors designated as Shared Donors. The recipient who selects the donor first is given first priority. If a donor is selected and RSC is not able to find another recipient within three months, the recipient will have the option to proceed with a cycle at full cost or may continue to wait for another recipient.

Cycle Stimulation and Embryo Transfer

The egg donor receives medications to stimulate the ovaries to produce multiple eggs. The donor's response is monitored by ultrasound examinations and blood draws. On the day of the egg retrieval, the eggs will be split between the two recipients equally. If there is an odd-number of mature eggs, then the first priority recipient will receive the additional egg. At the time of the egg retrieval, cells surrounding the eggs called granulosa cells, must be teased away to clearly inspect the egg to see if it is mature. Egg maturity can only be assessed when the eggs can be viewed directly. Once eggs are stripped of the granulosa cells, the safest way to inseminate them is through Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection or ICSI. While ICSI is not performed routinely in all IVF cycles, it is required in Shared Donor cycles. The advantage of ICSI is that it avoids any risk of unexpected fertilization failure. Typically embryos will divide to the blastocyst stage (Day 5) and then a single embryo will be transferred. Any additional high quality blastocysts are available to be frozen for future use. At RSC, we strongly believe that a singleton pregnancy is the safest pregnancy and single blastocyst transfers allow us to maintain extremely high pregnancy rates while minimizing the risks of multiples.

Pregnancy Rates

RSC's success rates with donor egg cycles are amongst the highest in the country. We see the same pregnancy rates in shared cycles that we see with single cycles. Our most recent pregnancy rates are 75-80% with the transfer of one blastocyst embryo.

Cycles without Sufficient Number of Eggs

If there are not enough mature eggs to allow each recipient to receive at least 4 mature eggs, the first recipient would receive all of the eggs. The second recipient's cycle would then be cancelled with minimal financial implications. In this situation, the second recipient would have the chance to match for another cycle with the same donor or a different donor. Less than 5% of all shared cycles have been cancelled since the inception of our Shared Donor cycle program.

Financial Considerations

The main advantage for a Shared Egg Donor Cycle is the reduce cost. For couples who are hoping to have only one or two children through egg donation, the Shared Egg Donor Program offers them a realistic chance to achieve their goal at a much lower cost than the traditional cycle.