



## **A Queer guide to building families**

Starting a family is such a unique experience for everyone! Nowadays, there are so many different ways you can go about it, that we decided to make an easy-to-read guide to explain your options. Below you will find a list of different ways to start a family, depending on the gametes (sex cells) that are naturally available to you, and further down there are detailed descriptions about what those options mean.

### **2 sets of sperm**

Fostering

Adoption

Surrogacy with one partner's sperm

Surrogacy with donor sperm

Surrogacy with a mixed sample of both partners sperm

### **2 sets of eggs**

Fostering

Adoption

Artificial insemination (AI) with donor sperm

Intrauterine Insemination (IUI)

In vitro Fertilisation (IVF) with donor sperm

Reciprocal IVF

Surrogacy with one partner's egg and donor sperm

Surrogacy with donor egg and donor sperm



## **1 set of eggs and 1 set of sperm**

Fostering

Adoption

Spontaneous pregnancy

AI with own/donor sperm

IUI with own sperm or donor sperm

IVF with own gametes

IVF with donor gametes

Surrogacy with own gamete/s or donor gametes

## **1 set of sperm**

Fostering

Adoption

Surrogacy with own sperm

Surrogacy with donor sperm

## **1 set of eggs**

Fostering

Adoption

AI with donor sperm

IUI with own/donor egg and donor sperm

IVF with own/donor egg and donor sperm

Surrogacy with own/donor egg and donor sperm

## **Neither**

Fostering

Adoption

Surrogacy with donor sperm/eggs



## **Definitions**

All the long words and technical phrases can get a bit complicated, below are what each of the different options actually mean.

### **Fostering**

Fostering is a temporary arrangement in which a child will come to live with you if their biological parents cannot care for them. The aim is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for the child whilst assessments are undertaken to determine where the most safe and appropriate permanent home for them is. There are different types of fostering, short term, long term, respite and kinship. If you choose to foster, you will not have any parental rights in the eye of the law.

### **Adoption**

Adoption is the legal process in which parental rights are transferred from a biological parent to an adoptive parent, normally when the parents are unable to care for the child and it is in the best interest for a child to have a permanent loving home.



## **Spontaneous pregnancy**

Achieved through sexual intercourse in which one partner produces sperm and the other has eggs and a uterus.

## **Artificial insemination (AI)**

Artificial insemination is inserting sperm into the vaginal canal without sexual intercourse. This usually involves using a syringe to collect sperm, placing the syringe inside the vagina, then using the syringe to insert the sperm into the vagina. This can be done on your own at home or at a clinic.

### **Artificial insemination with an anonymous donor**

You can purchase sperm from a fertility clinic that has been screened for quality, genetic problems and transmittable infections. You will be able to see a profile of the donor with non-identifying information such as hair/eye colour, height, education level and a short pen picture. The identity of the donor will remain anonymous but laws in the UK have changed recently meaning any child born from donor sperm can access the identity of the donor if they wish to once reaching 18 years old. Depending on the clinic you can then decide to inseminate at home or choose to have a clinician carry out the procedure in a clinic.



## **Artificial insemination with a known donor**

If you have someone already in your life that is happy to donate their sperm to you, you can use this to carry out AI. The donor would ejaculate into a receptacle, you can then use a sterile syringe to collect the sperm and insert it yourself. If you wish to carry this out it may be worth talking to the donor about their expectations with regards to parental rights.

## **Artificial insemination with sperm available within the couple**

If one partner produces sperm and the other has eggs and a uterus you can achieve pregnancy through AI by the sperm-producing partner ejaculation into a receptacle and using a sterile syringe to collect the sperm and inserting it into the other partners vagina.

## **Intrauterine Insemination (IUI)**

Achieved in a fertility clinic by placing the sperm directly into the uterus. You track your menstrual cycle to identify when ovulation is due to occur, this may also be determined by an ultrasound scan in the clinic. The sperm is prepared and frozen prior to ovulation. When ovulation occurs you attend the clinic, at which point a clinician will perform the



procedure by placing a small catheter directly into the uterus and releasing the sperm.

### **IUI with own sperm**

If one partner has sperm and the other has a uterus and eggs then you can attend a fertility clinic to have the sperm placed directly into the uterus as described above. This is often done in cases where sperm quality is lower as the sperm can be treated prior to the procedure to increase chances of achieving pregnancy.

### **IUI with donor sperm**

A fertility clinic will have a range of sperm available. You will be able to see a profile of the donor with non-identifying information such as hair/eye colour, height, education level and a short pen picture. The identity of the donor will remain anonymous but laws in the UK have changed recently meaning any child born from donor sperm can access the identity of the donor if they wish to once reaching 18 years old. The sperm has been treated and frozen prior to the procedure, which is carried out as described above.

### **In-vitro Fertilisation (IVF)**

A fertility treatment in which an egg is collected from the body, fertilised with sperm in a laboratory and the fertilised



egg (at that point called an embryo) is returned to the uterus to develop. The eggs are collected by passing a small needle through the vagina into the ovary, this is done under sedation. To fertilise the eggs, they are mixed with sperm, if they have not been fertilised under these conditions the sperm is injected into the egg. To return the embryo into the uterus the embryo is collected in a small catheter and passed through the cervix into the uterus.

### **IVF with own gametes**

If one partner produces sperm and the other has eggs and a uterus you can collect the eggs from one partner, fertilise them with the sperm of the other partner and have the embryo transferred to the partners uterus.

### **IVF with donor sperm**

You can have your own egg collected, fertilised with donor sperm and inserted back into your own uterus.

### **IVF with donor egg and own sperm**

In a couple in which one has a uterus and the other sperm, the partner that has a uterus may not have any eggs or might not be able to use their genetic material to have children. In that circumstance you can fertilise a donor egg with sperm originating from the couple and implant the embryo into the partner that has a uterus.



## **IVF with donor egg and donor sperm**

If you have a uterus but cannot use your own eggs and do not have a partner that produces sperm, to achieve pregnancy you can fertilise a donor egg with donor sperm and have the embryo implanted into your uterus.

## **Reciprocal IVF**

If you are a couple where one partner has eggs and the other a uterus, you can fertilise the eggs of one partner with donor sperm and implant the embryos into the other partner.

## **Surrogacy**

An arrangement in which a person with a uterus bears a child for another person/couple.

## **Surrogacy with own sperm and egg**

If you are a couple with your own eggs and sperm you can fertilise them through IVF and then the embryo can be implanted into a surrogate.





## **Surrogacy with donor sperm and own egg**

If you have eggs, you can fertilise them with donor sperm through IVF and they can be implanted into a surrogate.

## **Surrogacy with own sperm and donor egg**

If you have sperm, you can use your sperm to fertilise a donor egg with IVF and they can be implanted into a surrogate.

## **Surrogacy with own sperm and surrogate's egg**

Your sperm can fertilise a surrogate's egg through artificial insemination, intrauterine insemination, or IVF.

## **Surrogacy with donor sperm and egg**

You can select donor sperm and a donor egg, fertilise them through IVF and they can be implanted into a surrogate.