

FAQ: Fertility & Gender Affirmation Surgeries

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Q: How can LGBTQ+ couples prepare for the process of starting a family?

A: There are many paths to parenthood, but the first step in your journey starts with knowing yourself. Ask yourself some hard questions: not only, do you want to have children, but how many children do you want, how many years apart do you desire them to be, how old do you want to be when you start your family, is it important that they are biologically related to you, etc? The most important thing to know is that, regardless of your assigned sex at birth or sexual orientation, you have options.

With modern reproductive technology, same-sex male couples and single men can use their sperm to fertilize eggs from an egg donor, then implant the resulting embryo into a gestational carrier. Same-sex female couples and single women can have donor sperm inserted into the uterus at the time of their ovulation to try to achieve pregnancy. Same-sex female couples also have the option of reciprocal IVF—where fertilized eggs from one partner (with donor sperm) are implanted in her partner's uterus to carry the pregnancy. Which option might be best for you to achieve your ideal family can be answered by doing a fertility assessment at Kindbody. This would involve taking a thorough medical history, blood tests and sometimes an ultrasound, physical exam, and/or semen analysis. After your assessment, our specialists will then discuss your options, along with their success rates, risks, and benefits—so that you would be empowered to choose which path works best for you.

Q: Does taking testosterone/estrogen as part of a medical transition affect your chances of getting pregnant?

A: It is best to do fertility preservation before starting hormone treatment. However, fertility can be restored after stopping hormones.

Q: What happens if a patient has started the transition process already with hormone therapy but did not freeze sperm or eggs prior?

A: If someone is already on hormones but wants to freeze eggs or sperm, the hormones can be stopped to allow sperm production or ovarian stimulation. Hormones can then be restarted after the freezing is completed.

Q: Is there a suggested age to freeze eggs or sperm by?

A: Egg and sperm quality decline with age, so it is recommended to freeze when you are younger.

Q: What does the process look like if you are planning on using donor sperm?

A: If you are a same-sex female couple interested in starting a family, donor sperm can be used for either insemination or for the creation of an embryo for IVF. There are two kinds of donors: anonymous sperm donors and directed sperm donors.

Anonymous sperm donors can be found from cyrobanks, whose online databases can be searched/filtered for the characteristics that might be important to you in a donor, such as: hair color, eye color, height, complexion, education, ethnic origin, interests, etc. Once you find a donor that interests you, his frozen sperm can be purchased and sent to us at Kindbody once your fertility plan is in place.

Directed sperm donors are individuals who are known to you, usually a friend or close relative, whose sperm you choose to use for the purpose of insemination or IVF. A legal agreement and third party counseling between you, the donor and your partner, is recommended prior to use of any donated genetic material. We require that all patients using any type of donor have a conversation with a therapist to make sure they are comfortable with their choice before they start their cycle.

Directed donors must first go through a vetting process which involves taking his medical history, performing a physical exam, blood work including genetic screening and screening for infectious diseases, and a semen analysis. This testing is required from the FDA and must be done within seven days of the sperm sample that is used for production of the embryo.

Q: What does the process look like if you are planning on using donor eggs?

A: If you are a same-sex male couple interested in starting a family, donor eggs can be used for either insemination or for the creation of an embryo for IVF. There are two kinds of donors: anonymous frozen egg donors and directed egg donors.

Anonymous egg donors can be found from cyrobanks, whose online databases can be searched/filtered for the characteristics that might be important to you in a donor, such as: hair color, eye color, height, complexion, education, ethnic origin, interests, etc. Once you find a donor that interests you, a batch of frozen eggs can be purchased and sent to us at Kindbody once your fertility plan is in place.

Directed egg donors are individuals who are known to you, usually a friend or close relative, whose eggs you choose to use for the purpose of insemination or IVF. A legal agreement and third party counseling between you, the donor and your partner, is recommended prior to use of any donated genetic material. We require that all patients using any type of donor have a conversation with a therapist to make sure they are comfortable with their choice before they start their cycle.

Directed donors must first go through a vetting process which involves taking her medical history, performing a physical exam, blood work including genetic screening and screening for infectious diseases, and an ultrasound as part of her full fertility assessment. The egg donor will then go through the same egg freezing process as our other patients however once the eggs are harvested, they will be fertilized with you or your male partner's sperm.