



Donor Insemination

What is donor insemination?

Donor insemination is a technique that places donor sperm into a woman's uterus at the time of ovulation (release of egg). It is a common treatment for patients with severe male factor infertility, single women, same sex couples or male patients who do not want to pass along a genetic condition.

Donor insemination can be done with or without ovarian stimulation with medications, depending on the particular fertility challenge in question. The insemination is timed to coincide with ovulation.

How do I obtain donor sperm?

Donor sperm is obtained through the three licensed sperm banks in Canada. Sperm banks record extensive personal, medical and social histories from each sperm donor. This information can be used to narrow your search allowing you to identify a single donor who matches your specific criteria.

Donor sperm should be ordered prior to the start of the stimulation cycle. During your orientation session the nurse will provide you with contact information for the Canadian sperm banks so that you can start the process of gathering information on donor sperm options and select a donor. It is our clinic policy to limit a donor to no more than two family units. Patients will need to call the clinic with their donor selection prior to ordering. The specimen should be scheduled to arrive in the clinic no later than the first day of cycle monitoring.

Once the donor sample arrives at The Kelowna Regional Fertility Centre, what happens next?

The Kelowna Regional Fertility Centre's laboratory is equipped to receive and store your sample. You will be closely monitored and when ovulation is about to occur you will be scheduled to return to the clinic for insemination.

The sperm is thawed and the sample is loaded into a small plastic tube called a catheter. The semen is injected into the uterus near the fallopian tubes. The procedure is usually fast and painless. Following the procedure you should be able to return to normal activity. Approximately 10% of women experience menstrual-like cramps afterwards.

How successful is donor insemination?

The monthly pregnancy rate for donor insemination is approximately 15% (for women under age 35). Successful treatment depends on the woman's age and any other underlying conditions that may affect her fertility.

The pregnancy success rate within the first 6 cycles is approximately 60%. If conception does not occur by this point, other advanced treatments may be recommended.

What are the potential risks of this procedure?

Donor insemination is a very safe procedure. There is a <1% chance of introducing or re-activating an infection. Once a pregnancy occurs, it is no different than one that occurs naturally in a woman of the same age. There is no reported increase in birth abnormalities (3-5% in any pregnancy) or miscarriage rates with DI.

Other associated risks are dependent on any fertility medication that you may be taking. Although conception is more likely to occur when the woman's natural cycle is combined with hormone treatment to stimulate egg release, it does carry the associated risk of multiple pregnancy.

What services provided by The Kelowna Regional Fertility Centre are necessary for donor insemination?

Following an initial consult with the physician, and if no further fertility investigations are required, these services will likely be required:

- One hour orientation with our nursing staff
- One and a half hour counseling session with a psychologist (first time donor cycles only)
- Purchase of sperm sample (The Kelowna Regional Fertility Centre will assist you with the logistics of this process)
- Receipt of sperm sample by The Kelowna Regional Fertility Centre
- Cycle monitoring and possible ovarian stimulation.
- Preparation of sample for intrauterine insemination

Cost of the procedure

Donor insemination is not covered by British Columbia MSP. Please see the Kelowna Regional Fertility Centre's fee schedule for current pricing.