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FOR BABY, TODDLER
& MUM

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EGG COLLECTION This is the beginning of a standard IVF procedure. It is carried out in day surgery, taking around 15 minutes, with many patients returning to normal duties the next day. The donor is given a general anaesthetic and the eggs are retrieved via a small tube inserted through the vagina – there is no cutting. On the same day, the male partner is required to provide a fresh sample of semen.

EGG FERTILISATION An embryologist carefully places the collected eggs in a special dish

2007 revealed that each IVF cycle using donated eggs has a 25 to 40 percent chance of success.

In addition, success rates also relate directly to the age of the donor, so the younger the woman is, the more likely it is to work. However, the reason why centres normally prefer donors to have finished their families before becoming a donor is that there can be a small risk (very small but still a risk) that the IVF treatment, in particular the egg collection procedure, could impact their own fertility and that this could be devastating if they haven't already had their own children.

Despite the chance the egg donation may not always work, Haugh says that she would never deny a couple the chance to start a family. 'I guess I donated because I could,' she explains.

'I had been pregnant, married

and divorced before 20, and to be honest, I felt like I wasn't good at anything. So to discover that I am very fertile and could help so many infertile couples in some way was great. And if you ask me, anyone who craves so badly to want to get up to a screaming little person at 3am, change dirty nappies and be sleep deprived for the first two years will get my support every time.' ●

with a large number of sperm. The next day, the eggs are examined to see how many have fertilised, which is usually two-thirds.

EMBRYO TRANSFER Once an embryo has developed for two to five days, it is transferred into the recipient by a procedure similar to a Pap smear. Associate Professor Illingworth explains, 'To achieve a successful pregnancy, it is normally recommended that only a single embryo be transferred back at a time, and if there are any spare embryos, they can be frozen for later use.'

TESTING Sixteen days after the embryo transfer, the recipient takes a pregnancy test.

MEDICAL REALITIES

As with all medical treatments, there is some chance of complications with egg donation and the IVF cycle that follows. For the donor, these include possible side effects from the hormone medication, including minor symptoms such as breast soreness, nausea, lethargy, tenderness and swelling of the abdomen. Another complication, Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syndrome, occurs in approximately five percent of women, whose ovaries become unusually enlarged due to ovarian stimulation. It may consist of severe abdominal pain and fluid retention but can be treated with rest, fluids and pain-relief medication.

Success rates at clinics all differ so it's best to check them, but a publication released by the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority in

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RESOURCES

USEFUL CONTACTS

- faithhaugh@hotmail.com Faith has reached her quota of egg donation – 10 families – and is now helping other women who would like to donate their eggs.
- ivf.com.au Provides an overview of information on what to consider when becoming an egg or sperm donor. It also has the details of information evenings being held around Sydney. Plus it has an overseas program for those living abroad.
- bubhub.com.au The Bub Hub directory has a detailed list of places that offer assisted fertility services in each state.

JOIN OUR ONLINE FORUM

Are you already an egg donor or interested in becoming one? Talk about it on mychildmagazine.com.au.