

Would you help someone else become a **MUM?**

Having a baby is often described as the **miracle of life** – so would you help another couple's **dream** of having their own baby **come true?**

CARE Fertility in Northampton is desperately seeking women to donate eggs to enable couples with fertility problems to have their own child.

To donate you need to be aged 18-35 fit and well, with no genetic or hereditary illnesses or conditions.

Karen Faulkner, Donor Co-ordinator said: "We currently have 28 couples who are waiting for a donor egg to go ahead with the IVF treatment. Most of them are going to do this because they have gone into early menopause or because they have had IVF treatment with a poor response using their own eggs."

So what happens?

Egg donors are assessed and their family history is also assessed. Next they are screened for HIV, hepatitis, cystic fibrosis, karotype, and sexually transmitted diseases.

If all is well they go along to CARE Fertility for a consultation with a doctor who plans the treatment that will lead to being able to donate eggs.

"The egg donor is taught how to give themselves the hormone injections which they will then have to have daily, for about four or five weeks," added Karen. "This drug stimulates the ovaries which will produce follicles which will contain the eggs."

From there the donor's egg collection is synchronized with the recipient couple, and is a procedure that is carried out under sedation.

"The sedation makes it more comfort-

able but once it's done, the egg donor is unlikely to experience any pain or discomfort," said Karen.

The donor gets to know how many eggs have been collected, and the eggs are then split equally between two recipient couples – so donors can help two couples have their own babies.

The IVF process then takes place, and the egg is fertilized using sperm from the husband or partner. The fertilized egg becomes an embryo and is planted inside the recipient 'mum'.

"We have a one in three success rate here at CARE Fertility and last year we helped 43 couples have their own baby," added Karen. "Egg donation is an amazing gift that gives the recipients perhaps their only chance of being parents."

"Wanting a baby and being unable to have one is such an emotive

and painful experience that we want to help everyone who comes through our doors," added Karen.

"But we have seen the number of egg donors drop since the government ruling changed to allow donors to be identifiable."

Egg and sperm donors used to be able to do it anonymously with no chance of a child tracing them in the future. But now the law has changed.

"The government changed the law because they believe a child has a right to its genetic origin," explained Karen.

"This means that a child born as a

result of the donation will have access to the donor's information from the age of 18 years old."

So could you do it?

Karen added: "Most people will come in here and say that it is something they have always wanted to do – many because they know someone who was in a situation where they cannot get pregnant."

Sometimes egg donation is made by a sister or friend of the recipient mum, and couples having IVF can also 'share eggs'.

This involves an IVF couple whose fertility problem is not egg-related sharing the eggs that are harvested in their own treatment, and shared to another couple that need an egg. This can drastically reduce the cost of IVF treatment from the usual cost of £3000 down to £500.

Couples needing egg donation IVF treatment can expect to pay in the region of £5000 for one attempt.

Egg donors are not paid for the donation itself, but can claim up to £250 for loss of earnings as well as expenses.

"It really is a chance to give someone the most precious gift," added Karen.

"When you see these couples so desperate to have children going on to have their own baby, you know you've done something amazing."

Egg donors can find out if the process has been successful for the recipient couples or not – if they prefer.

To find out more call Care Fertility on **01604 601606**

or visit the website

www.donateanegg.com

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