Fertility Treatment for Lesbian Women
Assisting lesbian women to have a child using donor sperm

Introduction to the BCRM

The Bristol Centre for Reproductive Medicine welcomes lesbian women for fertility treatment. This BCRM treatment is provided on an NHS or self-funded basis depending on access criteria.

Fertility treatment can assist lesbian women to have a baby using donor sperm. The Bristol Centre for Reproductive Medicine (BCRM) is situated on the grounds at Southmead Hospital, Bristol.

This is a purpose built fertility clinic, which opened its doors in 2008, and we are licensed by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA).

“We were well looked after, we were not a number, but people whose thoughts, feelings and dreams mattered.”
Clair, Lynn, Luke and Harry - BCRM family

Exceptional healthcare, personally delivered
The HFEA is the independent regulator overseeing fertility treatments and research at centres across the UK. The HFEA can be contacted Monday - Friday **Tel: 020 7291 8200, Fax: 020 7291 8201 or by e-mail admin@hfea.gov.uk**

**Visit the BCRM**

The BCRM holds regular open evenings between 6 - 8pm. Specialist fertility nurses, Doctors, Embryologists and Theatre nurses, will be available to talk to you free of charge. Open evenings are a great opportunity for visitors to meet the team and other potential clients. At the Open Evening you will be shown around the BCRM and given the opportunity to discuss fertility treatment.

**The BCRM open evenings are very successful and you are welcome to attend.** Please contact the BCRM to let us know you are attending our open evening, telephone number 0117 414 6888.

**How to get started**

We will require a letter from your General Practitioner.

An appointment will then be made for you with a specialist fertility nurse at BCRM.

We will inform you of some blood tests which you will need to have done by your GP before your initial consultation. You will be required to complete a Health Assessment Questionnaire and a Counselling Self-assessment Questionnaire.

The first consultation includes an ultrasound scan of the uterus and ovaries and a discussion of your blood results. If further investigations are required we will discuss these with you.

We will also arrange a counselling appointment for you to discuss the implications of undergoing treatment with donor sperm.

**Investigations offered at the BCRM**

We will require some tests to be done to assess your suitability for treatment. Some of these are blood tests, which can be done at our centre for a fee.

Alternatively your GP may be able to help, and do these blood tests for you.

It is also a requirement that we check your Fallopian tubes prior to undertaking treatment; this is usually done by an X-ray dye test.

Where other problems are discovered, further tests and operations may be required. In this case you will be referred to a see an appropriate doctor outside of the BCRM.

**Treatments Offered (IUI / IVF)**

After your fertility assessments you will be offered treatment, which suits your individual needs:

- **Stimulated Intra-Uterine Insemination (IUI)**

Stimulated IUI is the usual treatment for women having insemination with donor sperm.

At the time of ovulation, prepared sperm is introduced directly into the uterus with the aim of getting the sperm nearer the egg for fertilisation. You will be instructed on how to take follicle-stimulating drugs.

These drugs will increase the production of eggs within the body. Scans will determine when you are ready for the IUI procedure. You will have less than three follicles of a certain size.
At a specified time after the final injection you will be asked to attend the clinic for your IUI procedure.

**In-Vitro Fertilisation (IVF)**

IVF is a very effective fertility treatment if there are fertility problems, for example:

- Blocked or damaged Fallopian tubes
- Endometriosis
- Women whose Fallopian tubes have been removed
- Repeated failure to conceive with IUI treatment

For IVF treatment you will take follicle stimulating hormone injections, which will increase the production of eggs within the body. Scans will reveal the optimum time for these eggs to be collected. You will be asked to attend the clinic on a specific day for these eggs to be collected under sedation.

**Donor Sperm**

Sperm donors are screened and considered to have a ‘normal’ level of fertility, health and intelligence. Donors come from all types of professions and cultures. Sperm is donated, frozen and stored. The BCRM has purchased stocks to reserve in advance of any treatment. If you want to purchase your own sperm from a centre either in the UK or abroad please ask the embryologist/nurse for information about this.

**Donor Sperm Matching Process**

At the BCRM an embryologist or nurse will match the donor to your requirements. You are the ‘Donor Sperm recipient’ and you will be given non-identifying information about the donors. This information will include: hair and eye colour, height, weight and blood group. Some sperm donors add additional information about themselves in a ‘pen portrait’ this may include hobbies/interests, likes/dislikes. The ‘pen portrait’ can be obtained at any time by Donor Sperm recipients, and can be passed on to your child.

More information may be available to your child when they are 16 years of old.

**Known Sperm Donor**

A known Sperm Donor is someone you know who would like to donate sperm for your treatment, please enquire about this at the BCRM.

**Treatment Support**

Treatment support is offered before, during and after fertility treatment. HFEA regulation states all couples or single women receiving donor sperm will have an initial implications counselling session. Our fertility therapist is a highly experienced, BICA accredited counsellor, who will talk through issues which relate to your treatment.

After your first counselling session you will be offered treatment support at your request throughout your treatment.

The BCRM are committed to the NBT equality and diversity initiatives. If you need this Leaflet in a different format: for example larger print or Braille, a video or oral tape or a particular language, please inform your nurse during consultation. If you need an interpreter or sign language, during your appointments please let us know.

The BCRM has facilities for wheelchair users. Please inform staff at the BCRM if you require any assistance with any disability you may have.