RAINBOW FERTILITY

*your dream, our passion*

Donor Program

# SURROGACY

## *What is Surrogacy?*

**Surrogacy refers to an arrangement whereby a woman (the surrogate) agrees to conceive, carry and birth a child for others (the intended parent/s) to raise. A surrogate can assist either couples or individuals in their attempt to become parents.**

There are two main types of surrogacy, traditional and gestational.

- **Traditional surrogacy:** In this case the surrogate provides her own eggs and is therefore genetically related to the child. With traditional surrogacy the surrogate can achieve a pregnancy either through Intra-Uterine Insemination (IUI) or In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) with sperm from the intended parent(s) or from a sperm donor.
- **Gestational surrogacy:** In this case the surrogate has no genetic link to the baby. Through the process of IVF, the egg (from a separate egg donor) is fertilised in the lab with sperm from the intended parent(s) or from a sperm donor, and the embryo created is then placed into the uterus of the gestational surrogate in order to achieve a pregnancy.

The egg donor can be a known donor or a clinic-recruited donor (unknown donor). Individuals or couples who are considering gestational surrogacy will have to determine which type of egg donor is right for them.

# *Finding a Surrogate*

**Most people find an egg donor and surrogate through family, friends, colleagues or support groups.**

**Arranging surrogacy can be challenging in many countries, including Australia. And while we can't directly help you find a surrogate, we can provide some links to organisations that may be able to help. Please refer to the Surrogacy section on our website for more information and useful links. Our dedicated staff will be with you every step of the way to offer support throughout your journey.**

## *Compulsory requirements and the process of Surrogacy*

Surrogacy is a highly complex process. There are some important steps required to ensure that all parties involved make an informed decision. These include counselling, psychological assessment, independent legal advice, consenting process and screening tests for donors and surrogate. All of these steps need to be completed before treatment begins.

A surrogacy ethics committee will need to review and approve surrogacy cases before they can begin.

**We have tried to make the family-building process as simple as possible. But there are some important steps along the way. Here's a quick overview of the process:**

### Planning

There are three things you'll need to build a family: sperm, an egg and a surrogate to carry the pregnancy. The hardest part will usually be finding a surrogate, who may, or may not, also be your egg donor. While we directly cannot help you find a surrogate, we can share our knowledge on what to look for.

### Medical Consultation

To book an initial consultation with one of our clinicians, you'll need to be referred from your GP. You'll be able to claim some of the consultation cost back through Medicare. To make things easier, you can download a referral form from our website: **rainbowfertility.com.au** and hand it to your GP to fill in.

During your appointment with a Rainbow Fertility clinician, he or she will explain the medical procedures involving egg donor and surrogate to you. He or she will also check all your relevant medical details.

## PLEASE NOTE:

- **In Australia, surrogacy must be altruistic; commercial surrogacy is illegal.**
- **All Surrogacy Acts prohibit any advertising to be undertaken by the commissioning couple or agent of the commissioning couple for the services of a surrogate.**
- **We cannot advertise or assist in the advertising to attract potential surrogates. Commissioning or intended parent(s) must find the surrogate themselves.**
- **Due to state legislation in Victoria, the surrogate cannot also be the egg donor, so the surrogate and the egg donor must be two different women.**

As part of the assessment, intended parents, surrogates and their partners are required to undergo the following routine screening blood tests:

- Hepatitis B
- Hepititas C
- HIV
- HTLV 1+2
- CMV
- Syphillis
- Rubella
- Blood Group

Your clinician will advise you of the tests you require and any additional tests that you may need.

### Surrogacy Committee Review

Every surrogacy case we're involved in has to be approved by a surrogacy committee, including fertility nurses, scientists and counsellors.

During the initial review, the committee reviews the intended parent/parents' medical health history and considers their motivation for surrogacy. In Australia, each state has different legislation in regards to surrogacy, and the committee makes their decision based on the laws in that particular state.

After the review, your clinician will let you know whether you can proceed to the counselling and legal stages of surrogacy.

### Counselling

It is mandatory for people who are considering entering into a donor and surrogacy arrangement to attend counselling. Counselling provides the opportunity to discuss treatment on a more personal level, taking into account the emotional responsibilities of all parties involved. It also enables patients to raise issues that are more private, such as individual concerns, relationship difficulties, or current life situations that may affect their experience of treatment. If you have existing children, they may be invited to attend.

## Legal Consultation

The intended parent(s) and the surrogate (and any partner) will be required to organise separate appointments to obtain independent legal advice.

### PLEASE NOTE:

**Each must use a different legal advisor, experienced in surrogacy.**

## Final Surrogacy Committee Review

Once all parties have met with the clinician, all screening tests and consent forms are complete, counselling sessions have been attended/ reports made available and legal arrangements are in place, the surrogacy committee will do the final review of the case. The final recommendation will be forwarded to your Rainbow Fertility clinician, who will inform you of the outcome and whether you can proceed with the surrogacy.

### PLEASE NOTE:

**In Victoria all surrogacy arrangements must also be approved by the Patient Review Panel www.health.vic.gov.au**.

## Fertility Coordinator Information Session

After the final surrogacy committee approval, all parties involved in the surrogacy (and any partners) must meet separately with a fertility coordinator to discuss specific details of the treatment cycle, including:

- Proposed IVF treatment cycle for the egg donor.
- Semen sample collection on the day of egg collection.
- The three-month embryo quarantine and subsequent tests.
- The frozen embryo treatment cycle for the surrogate.
- Consenting to the procedure (consent forms are provided to fill in and sign).

### Treatment for Egg Donor

Once treatment is approved, the egg donor is prepared for an In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) cycle, after which eggs are retrieved for fertilisation. The donor eggs are then fertilised with sperm from the intended parent to create embryos.

### Quarantine Period

To ensure maximum safety for all parties, our quarantine policy means all embryos have to be frozen and quarantined for three months. After this period, the egg donor and commissioning parent(s) are required to return for final screening tests. If all tests are passed and we're confident that no infections can be passed on to the surrogate, embryos are cleared for use.

### Treatment for Surrogate

Once the three-month embryo quarantine period is over and the final screening tests are cleared, the surrogate can begin a Frozen Embryo Transfer (FET) cycle.

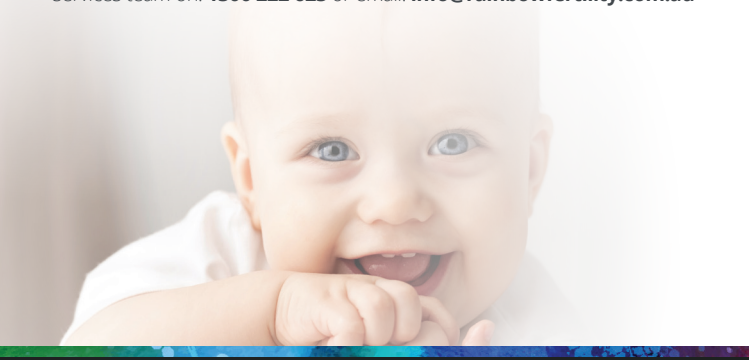
### PLEASE NOTE:

- **The order and/or number of these steps/requirements may vary depending on your circumstances.**
- **People wishing to have assisted reproductive treatment in Victoria must undergo a criminal records check and child protection order check.**
- **In Victoria traditional surrogacy is not permitted.**
- **All treatment procedures are carried out at our RTAC (Reproductive Technology Accreditation Committee) accredited fertility clinics, where gametes (eggs/sperm) and embryos are also stored.**

## *Costs involved*

The costs will vary between patients depending on their particular case and the level of treatment required. The costs will consist of your lawyer's fees, clinic's fees and any cost your surrogate and egg donor may incur as a direct consequence of entering into the surrogacy arrangement.

If you have any questions regarding treatment fees, Medicare and private health rebates, please do not hesitate to contact our friendly patient services team on: **1300 222 623** or email: **info@rainbowfertility.com.au**



*Take the first step and contact our friendly team*

# *Where to now?*

**I WANT MORE INFORMATION**
Contact our Fertility Advice Team or book a 15 minute nurse chat

**I'M READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP**
Book an appointment with us and get a referral to Rainbow Fertility from your GP

**1300 222 623**
**info@rainbowfertility.com.au**
**rainbowfertility.com.au**

## LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

**Rainbow Fertility encourages all individuals/couples to seek independent legal advice before taking part in the program.**

An initiative of City Fertility

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