

# DONOR SPERM INFORMATION



**PIVET MEDICAL CENTRE**  
**ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM**

**166-168 CAMBRIDGE STREET  
LEEDERVILLE 6007  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

[www.pivet.com.au](http://www.pivet.com.au)

# SPERM DONATION - PATIENT INFORMATION

## 1. What is sperm donation?

Sperm donation refers to the use of sperm which has been donated by a person called a 'donor'. This sperm is used to assist single women, same sex couples, or heterosexual couples, known as 'recipients', in their attempt to become parents.

Donor sperm is used either for an intra uterine insemination (IUI) or an IVF/ICSI treatment cycle. The treatment cycle is determined by the Fertility Specialist (Doctor) following assessment and investigation of fertility requirements. In the case of single females or same sex couples, this assessment is a necessity prior to accessing donor sperm. Single women and same sex couples can only access IVF/ICSI procedures for medical reasons rather than social reasons.

The decision to donate sperm or to receive donated sperm will have a significant impact on the donor, the recipients, and their families. Therefore donating or receiving donor sperm should be a carefully considered and informed decision encompassing legal rights and responsibilities of all parties including the potential child.

In Western Australia, the donation and receiving of donor sperm is governed by legislation under the Reproductive Technology Act (1991) and the HRT Act Directions.

Information regarding donation can be discussed with the Donor Co-ordinator or by emailing the clinic [info@pivet.com.au](mailto:info@pivet.com.au).

## 2. Known vs Unknown Donation

PIVET can coordinate your treatment with the use of either a known sperm donor, or an unknown sperm donor.

- **Known donation** is when the identities of the donor and the recipient are known to both parties before the donation takes place. This could be between family members or friends, and may also be an acquaintance or recruited through advertising. The donated sperm is solely donated to and used by the one recipient.
- **Unknown donation** is when the identities of the donor and the recipient are not known to either party before the donation takes place. In WA, up to five recipients can benefit from each unknown donation. This is considered the donors' five family limit.

To access PIVET's unknown donor sperm program, patients need to place their names on the donor waiting list. A consent to be on the wait list is signed at the patients initial appointment. The wait list works in chronological order and once patients near the top of the list, they will be contacted by the donor coordinator for the next steps in the process.

Once set up for a treatment cycle by a Clinician, recipients will be offered donor profiles from the donor coordinator. As the donors are unknown, only de-identifying information is provided on the profile. This includes; *height, build, hair colour, eye colour, complexion, blood group, age at donation, education, occupation, and ancestry*. The donor may also include his interests, a description of his reason(s) to donate and a copy of his genetic review is included.

## 3. Who can be a sperm donor?

The unknown donors we have at PIVET are locally recruited. We do not accept sperm donors from international sperm banks and rely on the interest and generous nature of men from the community. Most potential unknown donors contact the clinic as they have either witnessed family or friends struggle with infertility and wish to help or give back. Sometimes men who already have

semen straws stored at PIVET for their own personal reasons, prefer to donate them to the clinic rather than dispose them.

Unknown donors must donate altruistically (not involving monetary gain) and are only reimbursed for reasonable expenses. It is preferable for donors to be between 18-50 years of age.

#### 4. What is involved in becoming a sperm donor? Processing, Screening & Quarantine

The process commences with a referral from a GP for the donor to have an appointment with a Fertility Specialist. They are required to complete a Family Medical History form detailing an extensive list of genetic conditions. The doctor will discuss the donors' medical history and order an extensive blood screen, as well as a full semen analysis. The blood screening tests for a number of diseases and conditions.

The tests include the following screens:

- Karyotype: *all donors must have normal number and arrangements of chromosomes*
- Cystic Fibrosis
- SMA (Spinal Muscular Atrophy)
- Fragile X
- HIV I & II antibody
- HTLV I & II antibodies
- Syphilis
- Chlamydia
- Gonorrhoea
- Hepatitis B surface antigen
- Hepatitis B core antibody
- Hepatitis C antibody

Donors are also screened for ethnically related diseases, where appropriate:

- Mediterranean or Asian heritage - **Thalassaemia**
- African heritage - **Sickle-cell anaemia**
- Jewish heritage - **Tay-Sachs and Gaucher's disease**

Once a donors' infectious screening returns negative results, and his semen analysis returns a normal result, donations may begin. The donors' sperm samples are collected and frozen (cryopreserved) with up to ten (10) samples being frozen for each donor.

**Quarantine** commences once freezing is complete i.e. at the donor' last donation. Donated sperm is routinely quarantined for a minimum of three months. The donor is then requested to attend for a final blood test, the results of which will satisfy quarantine requirements. A donor profile is then generated and offered to recipients and the sperm is available for use in treatment.

#### 5. Genetic Counselling & residual risks for donors & recipients

All unknown donors have an appointment with the Genetic Counsellor to discuss their Family Medical History form. A copy of their genetic consult is provided on the donor profile you receive as a recipient.

If a genetic disorder is declared by a donor, the potential recipient may wish to make an appointment with our Genetic Counsellor to discuss the risks of inheritance of this disorder in relation to the background general population risk.

Despite the level of screening performed, there are still risks associated with the treatment, as there are many other genetic diseases that are deemed to be at too low risk for testing or the technology is not yet available for testing. If pregnancy should result from the treatment, we cannot

rule out the possibility of physical, mental or psychological abnormalities to the child from an unsuspected hereditary illness.

It should be noted that the risk of chromosomal abnormalities increases with the age of the donor, and that there are higher miscarriage rates and lower successful implantation rates in higher age groups for recipients.

All recipients are strongly encouraged to consult with PIVET's Genetic Counsellor, prior to a treatment cycle where donated sperm is being utilised.

## 6. Donor Implications Counselling

Counselling is provided from PIVET's Fertility Counsellor who has experience in all aspects of infertility and reproductive health issues. It is PIVET Policy that all sperm donors (and partner if any) and all patients accessing **unknown donor sperm** have at least one counselling session to consider the implications for them and the donor conceived child. Follow up counselling can also be arranged if required.

Attending Counselling prior to donating gives potential donors the opportunity to discuss and explore:

- their motivation and expectations for donation
- the impact donation may have on their family (and other children if applicable)
- how they may feel if the donation is successful
- the future release of their identifying information
- the impact possible on their own fertility

Information regarding the medical, personal and social implications of caring for donor children is also available from:

- Reproductive Technology Council - <http://www rtc org au>
- Donor Conception Support Group - <http://www dcs g org au>

In the case of **known donation** all parties (donor & partner if any, recipient & partner if any) must attend two counseling sessions as individual couples and collective couples to commence and then to complete the required "cooling off" periods. The cooling off period is 3 months for sperm (this can run concurrently with the quarantine period) (HRT Act Directions 5.8 & Part 2 Schedule 4). During this time the sperm donor and all parties can decide to change their mind regarding the donation process.

## 7. Regulation and the law surrounding a child born from donor conception in Australia

The *Artificial Conception Act of 1985* protects the donor from any legal responsibilities or rights to any children born as a result of the donations, and any child born automatically becomes the legal child of the woman delivering or couple involved. This is the case for treatment of single women and couples (married, de facto, same sex).

In relation to a child born as a result of donation, all records are confidential to the clinic and the Reproductive Technology Unit Registers held by the WA Department of Health; identifying details are kept securely. The care of the child is the legal responsibility of the couple who consent to the donation procedure, and the husband or partner (in a de facto situation), if any, is the legal father/partner of the child.

Confidential identifying and non-identifying information about all donors, recipients, and children born as a result of donor treatment is supplied to the Reproductive Technology Unit Registers held by the WA Department of Health <http://www rtc org au>. Under the Human Reproductive Technology Act (1991) Amendment 1, December 2004 any child born as a result of egg / sperm or

embryo donation, on reaching the age of 16 years, has the right to access to identifying information about the donor, following approved counselling. This process may be facilitated by the Reproductive Technology Unit or clinics.

For children under the age of 16 years each donor and recipient needs to consent to sharing identifying information and the parent needs to consent on behalf of the child. There must be approved counselling of all parties (which may include the child).

All parties involved in donor conception (donors, parents of donor conceived children and donor conceived children over the age of 18 years), can register with Jigsaw DNA Connect where they may be able to access identifying information. Accessing information through Jigsaw will depend on whether the other parties are also registered and their instructions on information to be made available. The website for Jigsaw: [jigsawdna.org.wa](http://jigsawdna.org.wa)

There is also a requirement that the recipient of donor gametes or embryos return to PIVET (or mutually agreed pathology lab) to have a pregnancy test performed following the completion of a donor (egg, sperm or embryo) treatment cycle. This is important as regulations require that PIVET, as well as the Reproductive Technology Unit Registers held by the WA Health Department, keep track of all pregnancies from donor gametes or embryos.

## 8. Commonly asked questions & Extra Information

### What is involved emotionally in choosing a donor?

Choosing a donor is one of the most challenging decisions you will ever make.

- Give yourself time to grieve your loss of a genetic connection to your child.
- Give yourself time to move forward and appreciate the options available through medical procedures.
- Take the time to realize that you (and your partner) are creating a child who is unique to your family and would not be created if not for your love for each other.
- Remember that blending the genetics of any two people will bring an unpredictable outcome in a child, a child that will be cherished regardless of hair colour or sporting achievement.
- Read about the characteristics of the donor and choose someone you can relate to and feel positive about. Choose someone who feels like a fit with your family.
- Make sure you are comfortable going ahead with treatment – there is extra counseling available should you feel you need it.
- For couples, ensure your choice is the one preferred by both partners.

### I have chosen a donor profile, now what?

Once you have chosen a donor from the profiles supplied by the donor coordinator, the donor profile is signed to officially accept the donor for use in your own treatment. As there is a surplus of straws available for most donors, you are welcome to use the donor in multiple attempts to conceive.

All treatment cycle worksheets and associated consent forms are signed and verified by the donor coordinator with the donor code you have chosen.

Once a donor conceived child is born from an attempt via IUI or IVF/ICSI treatment, you are recorded as a 'live family' for that donor's five family limit. You are then welcome to have multiple children with your chosen donor. For same-sex couples, each woman is welcome to conceive if they wish, and they are still considered as one family unit.

### What are the costs involved in receiving donor sperm?

The cost of receiving unknown donor sperm **is not included** in the treatment cycle fee.

If you are undertaking an Intrauterine Insemination (IUI) cycle you will require approximately 2 sperm straws; for IVF/ICSI, usually only 1 straw is required.

Please ensure that you arrange a meeting with the finance department so you are fully aware of the costs involved **prior to commencing a treatment** with the clinic.

### Medical vs Social Infertility - Do Medicare rebates apply?

IUI and IVF treatment cycles are available to individuals who are identified as medically infertile. Under Medicare, being medically infertile is a pre-condition for receiving fertility services. In turn, Medicare rebates can only apply if there is a medical reason that requires the treatment.

Medical infertility is defined as the inability to conceive after 12 months of regular unprotected intercourse. This can often be the case for heterosexual couples.

For single women and same-sex couples however, this identification cannot be the case, and they are defined as socially infertile. Therefore to be eligible for treatment, patients must undergo a fertility assessment to determine any pre-existing fertility conditions, or have at least one failed IUI treatment cycle to be deemed medically infertile.

### **What is the maximum time sperm can remain stored?**

Under PIVET policy, sperm may be stored for a maximum of 15 years, at which time it must be removed from storage and allowed to succumb.

Under exceptional circumstances the storage period may be extended following application to PIVET Medical Centre. Donated sperm cannot be used after the death of the donor.

### **Can sperm donors be paid for their donations?**

No, donating sperm is purely altruistic. In Australia it is illegal to receive or make any payment for human tissue, including donated sperm. Under the NHMRC Guidelines (2017), sperm donors may be reimbursed for reasonable, verifiable, expenses incurred during the donation process, such as travel and parking, however they cannot be compensated for loss of work time.

### **Can I request transport or transfer of the donor sperm to another clinic to continue treatment?**

In unknown donation, the donor material has been donated to PIVET for use within the clinic, therefore the recipient's treatment using unknown donor sperm is to be carried out at PIVET.

If the donor sperm is from a known donation, then the transfer to another clinic in Australia can be facilitated. This is done by the recipient making contact with their chosen Fertility Clinic and informing them of the intended transfer. PIVET will need to be notified at the same time so release forms can be arranged and signed. The laboratory at PIVET will then liaise directly with the clinic to organise the transfer.

The costs of transporting sperm to another clinic are paid by the recipient. Please speak to the finance department so you are fully aware of the costs involved in sperm transport.

### **What are the legal requirements for transportation of donor sperm outside Australia?**

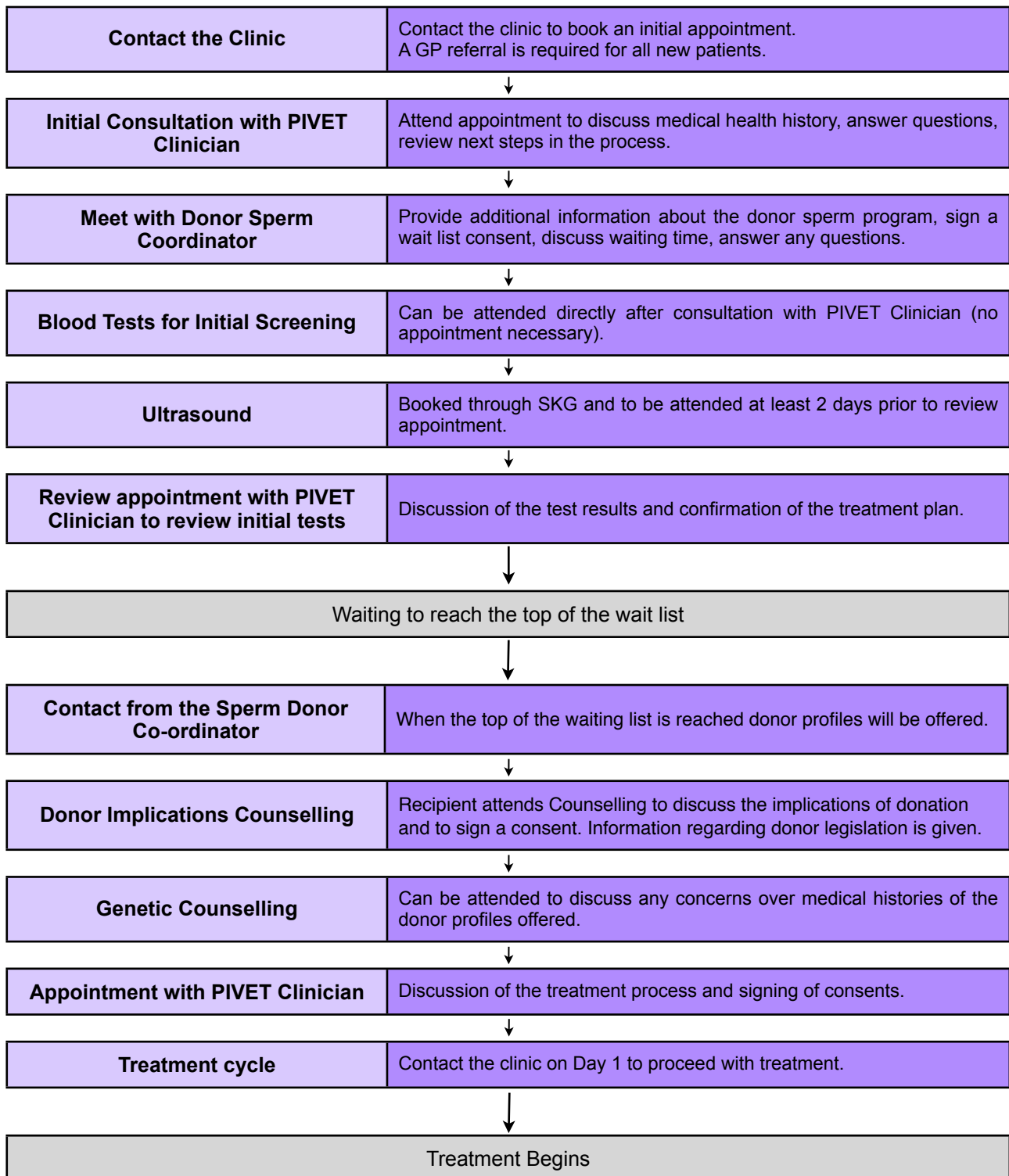
An international clinic needs to be nominated so that arrangements can be made between PIVET and the nominated clinic. Appropriate international couriers need to be appointed so that declarations and paperwork can be signed before transportation.

The requirements of the Human Reproductive Technology Act (1991) impose certain conditions on the transfer of donated sperm as follows:-

- Information about the use and outcome of the donation.
- Consenting must be completed by all parties prior to treatment and copies of consents available.
- Counselling has to be undertaken by all parties prior to treatment with associated reports.
- Donor Identifying information must be provided to the receiving clinic.
- The donor sperm cannot be used in a surrogacy treatment.
- Application for a birth certificate and Australian requirements for registration of a birth need to be clarified for any child born from donation.

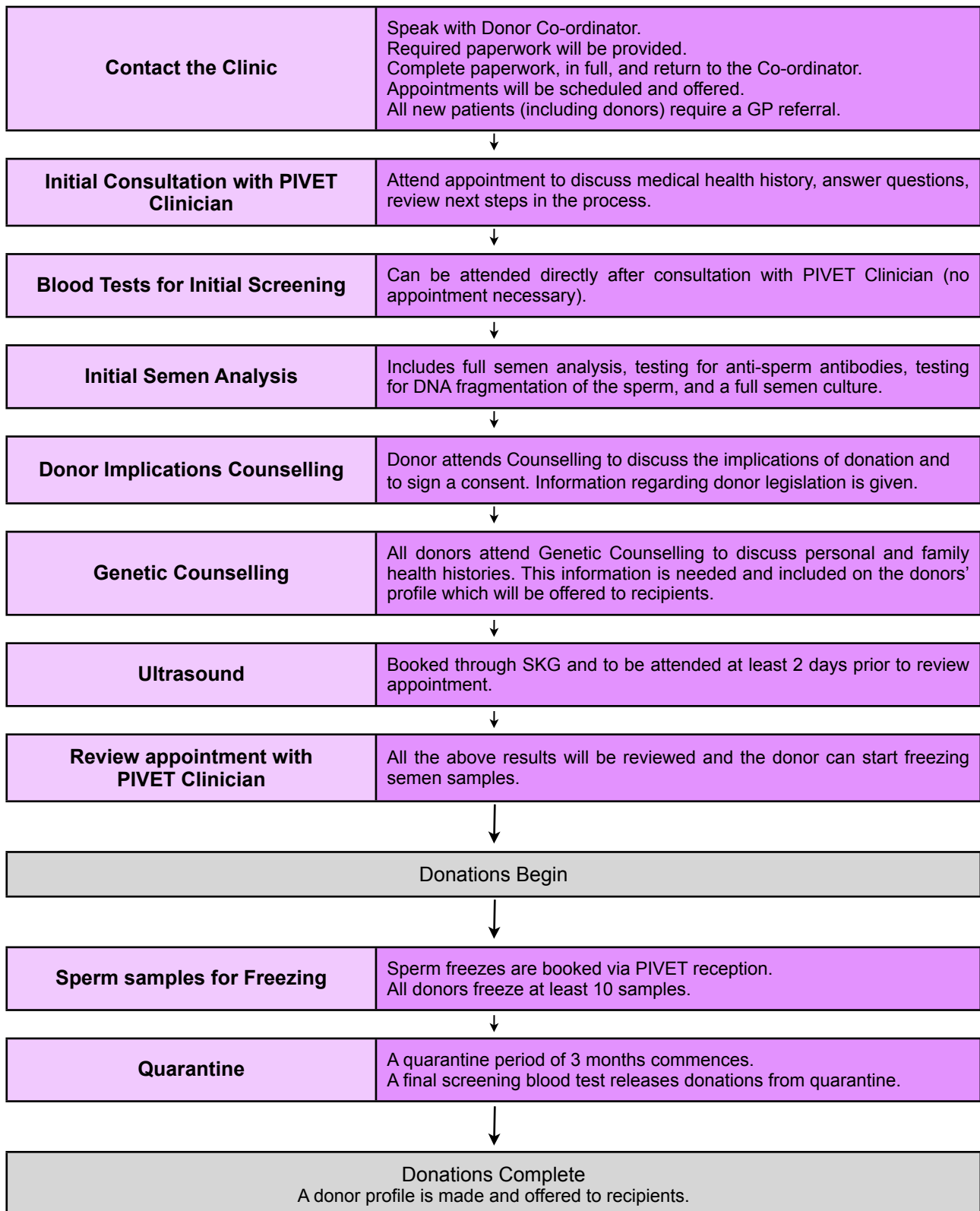
All the conditions need to be documented together with approval from the Reproductive Technology Council for the export of donor sperm for a patient's use in an overseas clinic.

## Patients Preparing for Treatment with Unknown Donor Sperm (Recipient)

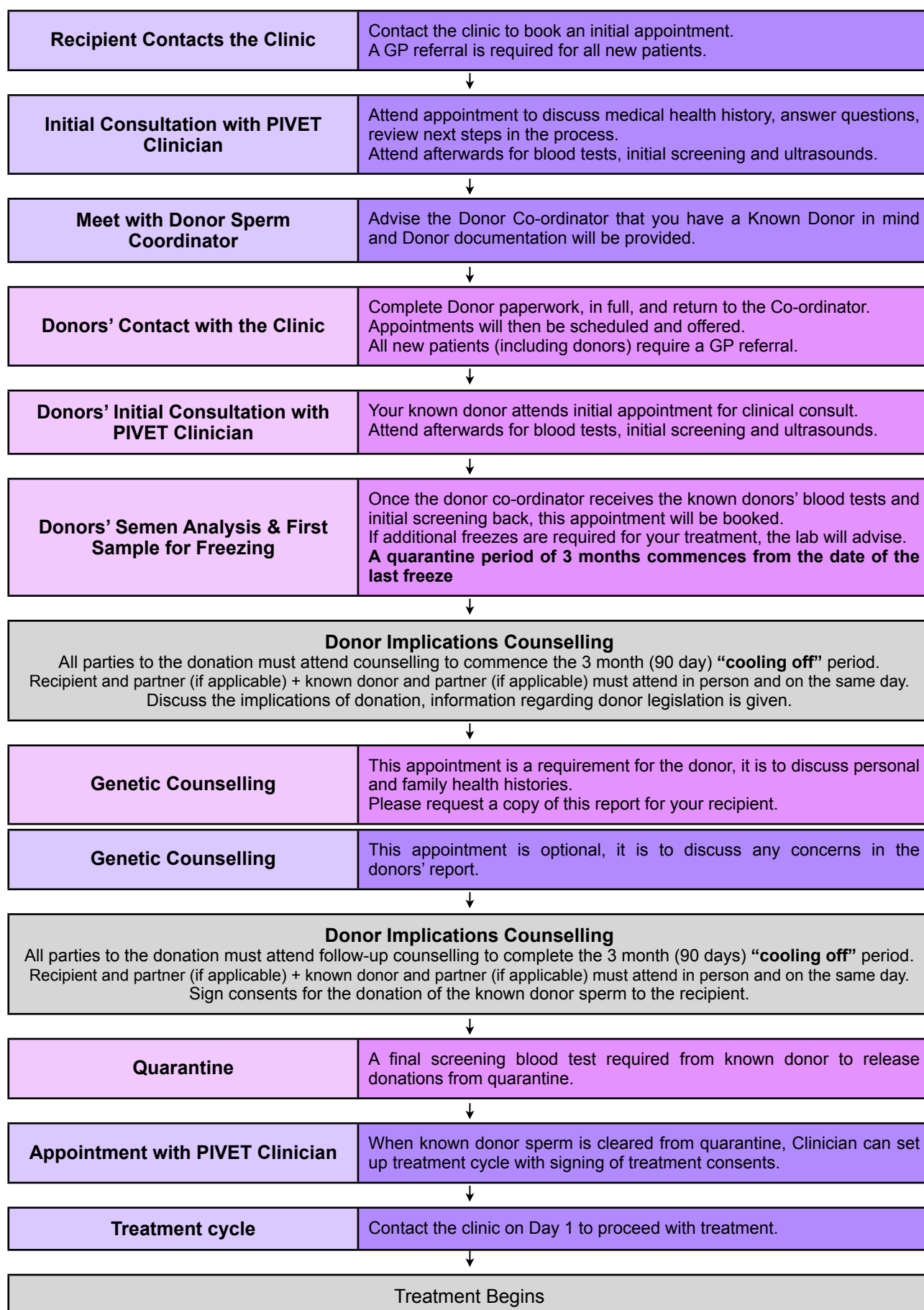




## Processing an Unknown Sperm Donor (Donor)



## Patients Preparing for Treatment with Known Donor Sperm (Recipient & Donor)



## 9. References

- **WA Reproductive Technology Council**

[www.rtc.org.au](http://www.rtc.org.au)

Information about relevant WA legislation, including the Donor Register and access to identifying information for donor conceived persons.

- **Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority**

[www.varta.org.au](http://www.varta.org.au)

Victoria's legislation is different to WA's, however, this website provides some very useful resources, including the publications: *Why, when, and how to tell children about donor conception*; Kirkman, M. et al. *Telling It Your Way: A Guide for Parents of Donor Conceived Adolescents*, and the webinar "*Time to Tell*".

- **Donor Conception Support Group**

[www.dcsq.org.au](http://www.dcsq.org.au)

Australia wide internet-based support group for donors, recipients, and offspring; has various publications available for purchase and identifies other activities and resources.

- **Rainbow Families**

[www.rainbowfamilies.com.au](http://www.rainbowfamilies.com.au)

Internet based support group for same-sex couples/parents, mainly based on the East Coast. Variety of activities, resources, and special interest groups etc.

- **Solo Mothers by Choice**

[www.smcaustralia.org.au](http://www.smcaustralia.org.au)

Internet based support group; based on the USA group, *Single Mothers by Choice*. State-based activities/social meetings.

- **Assisted Reproductive Technology: Books for Children**

<http://booksfordonoroffspring.blogspot.com>

Lists and reviews a wide range of books for parents and children which explain assisted reproduction, includes IVF, egg /sperm and embryo donation, surrogacy, adoption, gay/single and heterosexual parents, and includes books in languages other than English. Updated regularly.