

# Finding out about your child's donor and any possible donor-conceived genetic siblings



If your child was conceived with the help of a donor at a UK clinic, they may be curious to find out a bit more about this person and/or any other people conceived using the same donor (their donor-conceived genetic siblings). We're here to provide that information.

This leaflet explains what information we hold, what you and your child can access from us (if you want to) and how you can best prepare for the next steps.

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## What information does the HFEA hold?

Clinics are legally required to submit information to us when they carry out fertility treatment involving donor sperm, eggs or embryos. This includes information about the patient(s), the donor(s), and the child(ren) born as a result of treatment. All of this information is stored on a secure database called the HFEA Register.

The Register only contains information about people who were conceived after 1 August 1991, the date the HFEA was set up. If your child was conceived before then, there are other options you can try to find out about their donor. Visit

[www.hfea.gov.uk/donation/donor-conceived-people-and-their-parents/finding-out-about-your-donor-and-genetic-siblings](http://www.hfea.gov.uk/donation/donor-conceived-people-and-their-parents/finding-out-about-your-donor-and-genetic-siblings) for more information.

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## What information can I find out about my child's donor(s) and any possible donor-conceived genetic siblings?

You can request the non-identifying information we hold about your child's donor (such as a physical description, year of birth, ethnicity and occupation) at any time after their birth. The information we have will depend on when your child was conceived, as the information donors have been required to give us has changed over the years. Find out more about what it could include at [www.hfea.gov.uk/donation/donor-conceived-people-and-their-parents/finding-out-about-your-donor-and-genetic-siblings](http://www.hfea.gov.uk/donation/donor-conceived-people-and-their-parents/finding-out-about-your-donor-and-genetic-siblings).

If your child was conceived before 31 March 2005\*, their donor will have been anonymous. However, the law has since been changed so that people who donated at that time can choose to lift their anonymity and share their identity with any people conceived from their donation once they are 18. We

can tell you if your child's donor has chosen to do this but we cannot give you identifying information about them.

We can also tell you the number, sex and year of birth of any donor-conceived genetic siblings – again, we can't give you identifying information about them.

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## What information can my child find out about their donor(s) and donor-conceived genetic siblings and when?

At 16, your child can ask us for non-identifying information about their donor and the number, sex and year of birth of any donor-conceived genetic siblings (ie, the same information that you can access).

At 18, your child can ask us for their donor's identity (including their full name, date and place of birth and last address supplied to us), if:

- they were conceived between 1 August 1991 and 31 March 2005, when donation was anonymous, **and** the donor has since agreed to lift their anonymity, or
- they were conceived after 1 April 2005\*, when the law

changed so that people could no longer donate anonymously.

\*Sperm and embryos can be stored for up to 10 years and still used in treatment. So if someone donated before 1 April 2005, even if it has been used more recently in treatment, it is still viewed as an anonymous donation. Your clinic will have told you if this was the case in your treatment.

Your child can use this information to make contact with the donor if they wish and we're here to offer support if they'd like it. Find out more about our confidential specialist support service at [www.hfea.gov.uk/donation/donor-conceived-people-and-their-parents/support-and-intermediary-service](http://www.hfea.gov.uk/donation/donor-conceived-people-and-their-parents/support-and-intermediary-service).

We will try to contact the donor to let them know that your child has requested this information, but if, when and how contact is made is your child's decision. The donor cannot find out any identifying information about your child from us and so has no means of trying to contact them first.

At 18, your child can also choose to share their contact details with any donor-conceived genetic siblings by joining our Donor Sibling Link (DSL) service. This is a voluntary contact

register so your child can only share contact details with any donor-conceived genetic siblings who've also joined DSL or who join in the future.

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## What information can the donor find out about my child(ren)?

Donors can find out the number, sex and year of birth of any children conceived from their donation by applying to us for this information. They cannot find out their identity.

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## I'm interested in applying for information, what next?

Before applying for information, it's important that both you and your

child(ren) are prepared.

Accessing information can raise some unexpected feelings and so we encourage you to talk about it with your child(ren) and a professional or other people who have already been through a similar experience. Visit [www.hfea.gov.uk/donation/donor-conceived-people-and-their-parents/get-support-advice](http://www.hfea.gov.uk/donation/donor-conceived-people-and-their-parents/get-support-advice) for information about where to go for support.

Once you're sure you want to proceed, you'll need to complete an application form and post it to us along with proof of identification and address.

Visit [www.hfea.gov.uk/donation/donor-conceived-people-and-their-parents/apply-for-information](http://www.hfea.gov.uk/donation/donor-conceived-people-and-their-parents/apply-for-information) to download the form, or email us on [openingtheregister@hfea.gov.uk](mailto:openingtheregister@hfea.gov.uk) or call 020 7291 8200.

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Did you find this leaflet useful? Could it be improved? Please let us know by emailing [enquiriesteam@hfea.gov.uk](mailto:enquiriesteam@hfea.gov.uk).

You can also email us if you'd like to know more about our evidence sources.

**[www.hfea.gov.uk](http://www.hfea.gov.uk)**