



# Building Your Family

at Northwestern Medicine  
Fertility and Reproductive Medicine



# Building your family

Northwestern Medicine Fertility and Reproductive Medicine takes pride in helping all individuals and couples build their families. Procreation is a natural desire for many individuals and our faculty and staff provide an inclusive and supportive environment to all of our patients undergoing fertility treatment.

We understand that family building can be an emotional and sometimes stressful process and we will be there to help guide you on your path to parenthood.

We are a successful fertility program offering comprehensive services in downtown Chicago. Our physicians, and other members of our team, are sensitive to patient's goals and needs, and steadfast in our support of all of our patients. We will help you fulfill your family building dreams.



There are many paths to parenthood for same-sex couples. We offer a full array of family-building strategies, including artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization, egg and sperm donation, and gestational surrogacy.

# Reproductive options

## Options for lesbian women/couples

Lesbian women/couples may undergo treatment with artificial insemination (Intrauterine Insemination; IUI), using sperm from a known donor or from a sperm donor identified through a sperm bank. IUI is a relatively simple and painless treatment that is either performed with or without the patient taking hormone medications. Home treatment with donor sperm often places the sperm in the cervix. However, **intrauterine insemination** inserts the sperm directly into the uterus, which can maximize your chances of getting pregnant.

Some female couples desire that both partners are physically involved in conception. In that case, **reciprocal in vitro fertilization (IVF)** makes it possible to use one

partner's eggs to create embryos to be fertilized with donor sperm and then transferred into the other partner's uterus.

## Options for gay men/couples

Gay men/couples may choose to work with a gestational carrier and an egg donor to help them build their families through IVF. We work with several egg donor and gestational carrier agencies that can facilitate your search for an egg donor or surrogate. We will then work with the identified agency to coordinate treatment with all parties.

## Options for transgender individuals and couples

Transgender individuals and couples may also want to consider intrauterine insemination, IVF and/or the use of a donor or gestational carrier, if needed. Transgender individuals considering initiating hormone treatments or surgical removal of their ovaries or testes can consult with us about options for preserving their fertility prior to surgery or hormone therapy, as those treatments could preclude having a biological child in the future.

There are many ways to build a family. We will help you find the one that's best for you.

Northwestern Medicine Fertility and Reproductive Medicine can offer you the combined skills and knowledge of our team of board-certified reproductive endocrinology and infertility specialists, and our caring staff, who will





explain the treatment process, order evaluation tests, and answer all your questions. Our clinic meets or exceeds the highest professional standards in the field, as set by The American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM), and our pregnancy success rates are well above the national average.

#### **Donor sperm banks**

Donor sperm is available from several reliable sperm banks (California Cryobank, Fairfax Cryobank, and Xytex) with whom we work. The sperm donors are screened for STDs and the sperm bank freezes the sperm for 6 months prior to being available for purchase. The donor's profiles are accessible online and provide a summary of the donor's family and medical history as well as information about the donor's demographic background. If you choose your donor from a different sperm bank, please let us know. We may be able to work with the sperm bank if it adheres to ASRM and FDA guidelines pertaining to donor sperm.

#### **Egg donor/gestational carrier agencies**

If you are seeking an egg donor or gestational carrier, we have established relationships with Alternative Reproductive Resources (ARR), ConceiveAbilities, Graceful Conceptions, and the Center for Egg Options. If you choose your donor or gestational carrier from a different agency, please let us know. We may be able to work with the agency if it adheres to ASRM and FDA guidelines.

# Fertility treatment with family or friends as your donor or gestational carrier

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Things to consider if using a donor or gestational carrier who is a family member or friend:

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FDA guidelines require a known donor's sperm to be frozen and quarantined for at least 6 months prior to its use in fertility treatment.

Gestational carriers/surrogates need to have given birth to, and have parented, at least one child.

Like agency egg donors and gestational carriers, known donors and gestational carriers will undergo medical and psychological evaluation.

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Building your family is a momentous and emotional journey. Sometimes family building can also be a difficult one, as it may take longer than hoped or be filled with uncertainties. As such, Northwestern Medicine Fertility and Reproductive Medicine has two clinical psychologists to help our patients. We invite you to contact them at any time, but especially at any difficult times in your family building journey.



# About Northwestern Medicine Fertility and Reproductive Medicine

Northwestern Medicine Fertility and Reproductive Medicine is widely regarded as one of the best infertility units in the country.

Jared C. Robins, MD, division chief and the team at Northwestern Medicine Fertility and Reproductive Medicine are committed to meeting the needs of women and men affected by infertility-related conditions through multidisciplinary approach. We understand the stress caused by difficulties with fertility and reproductive medicine and will, through our personalized care, guide you through treatment with compassion and understanding. Our faculty includes two PhD clinical psychologists that will help navigate the emotional experience of treatment.

The internationally acclaimed clinician researchers at Northwestern Medicine Fertility and Reproductive Medicine are striving to develop and improve reproductive

technologies. Therefore, you can be assured that, as a patient, you will be treated with the most modern and leading-edge technologies. We also participate in many clinical trials that help us learn more about infertility and how to best treat them.

If you choose Northwestern Medicine for your fertility-related treatments, we will work with you to find a treatment plan that works for you.

## **Need a second opinion?**

Our eight board-certified physicians have over 10 decades of experience and have helped thousands of individuals and couples become parents and are available for second opinion consultations on your medical and surgical treatment options for infertility.

**Please call 312.694.6075 or visit [fertility.nm.org](https://www.fertility.nm.org) to arrange a second opinion consultation.**



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