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Love is FAMILY

AT OREGON REPRODUCTIVE MEDICINE, CONSTANTLY STRIVING FOR THE HIGHEST SUCCESS RATES WHILE PROVIDING PERSONALISED CARE IS IN OUR DNA AND A FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF THAT "LOVE IS FAMILY" FOR EVERYONE IS IN OUR HEARTS

Located in the beautiful and peaceful Pacific Northwest, Oregon Reproductive Medicine (ORM) has been helping create LGBT families from around the world since 1989. Founded with the goal of building the best fertility program possible, ORM is recognised globally for its consistently high live birth success rates and individualised care. We are committed to innovation that benefits our patients and helps achieve the best outcomes for them. In recent years we have experienced a 90% live birth rate with over 70% twins in our donor egg surrogacy program.

We truly understand that our work has a profound effect on the lives and hopes of our patients and their loved ones. Every member of the nearly 100 strong ORM team believe that "Love is Family" and we are honoured to help those that choose ORM on their important journey to grow their family.

OUR DOCTORS

ORM's global practice is led by Dr John Hesla and Dr Brandon Bankowski who are each internationally recognised for their professional excellence and commitment to improving the reproductive care of their patients. Together they have helped patients from over 40 countries create their families. Both completed their training at Johns Hopkins Hospital, which during their tenures there was ranked #1 for reproductive medicine in the USA for more than 20 years.

Dr Hesla joined ORM in 1999 when he co-founded its IVF program. He was instrumental

in building ORM's pioneering embryology laboratory clean room, one of the first in the world. Dr Hesla continues daily to push that high level of innovation and excellence in our stellar laboratory.

Dr Bankowski joined ORM in 2005 and he co-founded its industry-leading in-house genetics laboratory. Dr Bankowski strives to help patients achieve the best success while caring for the genetic health of their family through increased awareness, screening and the utilisation of state of the art genetic and chromosomal testing.

OUR TEAM

ORM's dedicated nursing staff is the heart and soul of our practice. This team of professionals is highly-regarded around the world for their individualised and compassionate care. In addition to our clinical team, the entire ORM family — including our embryologists, genetic counselors, psychologists, patient coordinators, donor coordinators, and financial counselors among others — cherish the work they do each day with our families.

At ORM we know that many of our global patients have specific and different needs. We have a dedicated team within ORM

focused on our international patients. They bring their special expertise and personal touch to help international patients through their journeys to parenthood. This extends to our on-the-ground ORM team members in some countries, including in the UK.

OUR EMBRYOLOGY LABORATORY

Professionals working within the field of assisted

reproductive medicine are constantly striving to make an in vitro environment for embryos that is as close to the conditions inside the human body as possible. When embryos are growing inside a woman's uterus they are protected from potential hazards in the air and otherwise by the body surrounding them, but when an embryo is growing in a culture dish in the laboratory, it does not have that level of protection. With this in mind, in 1999, we built The Reproductive Medicine Laboratory here at ORM utilising the expertise of engineers who design clean room facilities at Intel. This industry-leading facility and the work of our phenomenal embryologists is one of the key ingredients to our consistently high live birth success rates for patients.

ADVANCED GENETICS AT ORM

The understanding of genetics and the variety of tests available are both expanding rapidly. We believe that our patients should feel empowered to make informed decisions based on the latest technology and with accurate, up-to-date, and easy to understand information. Uniquely among many clinics, ORM has an in-house state-of-the-art genetics testing laboratory and a highly-experienced team of full-time, in-house genetics counselors.

We automatically test everyone that is contributing egg and sperm for the creation of an embryo for 100 recessive gene carrier diseases. This is significantly more comprehensive than standard practice among many clinics. We help our patients understand these results at the outset so that they can make the best choices for their families.

In addition, we are able to provide patients the most advanced chromosomal testing of embryos to best ensure that we only transfer ones that have tested normal. This further increases the chances of success for a healthy baby.



"The entire ORM team is honoured to have helped so many LGBT individuals around the world realise their dreams of creating a family"

EGG DONATION AND SURROGACY

We are proud to have an in-house egg donor program at ORM for those needing donor eggs. Our program is overseen by our physicians and clinical staff. We help our patients match with our fully pre-screened — medically, genetically, psychologically — donors and this helps them have a smoother process with fewer uncertainties. We believe that ORM egg donors go through the most extensive screening around and only 7% that apply pass our exacting standards. This is a key factor in our high success rates for patients using ORM donor eggs.

ORM has a core team that specialises in supporting our families who are working with gestational surrogates. We have

longstanding relationships with some of the best surrogacy agencies in the USA. We are able to help patients and their surrogates and egg donors seamlessly through their unique and complex journeys.

LGBT FAMILIES

ORM has a large LGBT community and all our staff has been specifically chosen and trained to be sensitive and aware of the needs of our LGBT patients. We work with both gay male couples, usually through egg donor surrogacy, and lesbian couples, who might typically utilise intrauterine insemination but also sometimes IVF. Doctors Hesla and Bankowski travel the world to speak about LGBT parenting, meet prospective LGBT parents, and share their vast experience. Both cherish their global following of LGBT patients and parents and the entire ORM team is honoured to have helped so many LGBT individuals around the world realise their dreams of creating a family.

And we love Pride! ORM is proud to show our support for LGBT families at Portland Pride and around the world from Tel Aviv to Shanghai to London!

MADE IN PORTLAND, OREGON

When our patients visit Portland, "City of Roses", we enjoy sharing with them everything that makes our home so special. We love offering our favorite suggestions and ORM's partner

hotels provide special ORM rates.

Portland is blessed with fresh, local, organic cuisine, among which is the best wine, beer and coffee in the Pacific Northwest. A walkable city with many neighbourhoods ideal for strolling, window-shopping and café-hopping, Portland is home to the largest US urban woodland. Our



airport is ranked #1 by travellers and we're connected with excellent public transportation. Many hotels have "lend a bike" programs.

Often ORM patients also explore beyond Portland. Oregon offers amazing sites whether you visit the Pacific Coastline or Cascade Mountains, both only an hour away, or the deserts of Eastern Oregon.

And Oregon is one of the few tax-free states for shopping, food and beverage. Great for all those baby needs!

We hope to welcome you to ORM in Portland and to help you build your family!

CONTACTING ORM

ORM's dedicated team includes a representative in the UK providing personal support to UK intended parents. Contact us to learn more and consult with our physicians on ORMUK@PortlandIVF.net OregonReproductiveMedicine.com

Ask THE DOCTOR

LEADING IVF PHYSICIAN, DR BRANDON J. BANKOWSKI,
OF WORLD-RENOWNED OREGON REPRODUCTIVE
MEDICINE, PROVIDES ANSWERS TO SOME OFTEN
ASKED QUESTIONS TO HELP PRIDE LIFE READERS
MAKE MORE INFORMED CHOICES ABOUT
IVF AND EGG DONOR SURROGACY

Prospective parents considering IVF and egg donor surrogacy are often overwhelmed and confused with a dizzying amount of information, unfamiliar terms and a multitude of options. In the USA, a frequent destination for prospective parents using egg donor surrogacy, there are hundreds of IVF clinics, surrogacy agencies and egg donation programs — each with differing offerings and costs. Knowing the right questions to ask and how to differentiate between the many options is essential for making the best choices for you personally.

Pride Life asked Dr Bankowski for his advice on some common questions.

What questions should prospective parents ask when choosing an IVF clinic?

First look at the live birth rates of clinics using a tool that has some oversight (not just clinic statistics or pregnancy rates). In the USA, this is through the Society of Assisted Reproductive Technology (SART) database (www.sart.org). Ask clinics to explain their success statistics.

Accessibility to the physician and clinical team is also crucial. How does the clinic communicate? Are they responsive to questions? How large is the team and what expertise do they have on staff?

Ask about their embryology laboratory. Are they experts in genetic testing? How do they screen egg donors, surrogates and prospective

parents? Do they have their own egg donor program? Ask about their egg donor surrogacy protocol as not every clinic does things the same way and this can impact your journey.

What is important to understand about IVF success statistics?

Using a validated database like SART is key. Other sources, like Men Having Babies, provide datapoints but only compare a very small number of self-reported outcomes and don't show the whole picture. The number of cycles performed and the number of embryos transferred help identify if the clinic's data are statistically significant and if the embryology laboratory is top notch.

Most clinics report pregnancy rates because they appear higher, not live birth rates, which is what matters. Success rates vary year-on-year depending on many factors including the composition of patients being treated in a given year. Look for consistency and high success rates over a multi-year period in both fresh and frozen embryo transfer data.

Twin vs single embryo transfer: what are the pros and cons?

Often prospective parents are hoping for twins through one surrogacy journey, including many gay male couples who each hope to be a genetic parent. Transferring one embryo has the lowest

risk for the surrogate and baby for a healthy pregnancy and normal delivery. Transferring two embryos does increase the chance of at least one implanting and often results in twins. Many twin pregnancies are normal, but they carry a greater risk of complications for the surrogate, the most common of which is pre-term labour. This may mean bed-rest for the surrogate, early delivery, and premature birth complications for the babies. Caesarian delivery is also more common for twins. Twin embryo transfers also carry a small but increased risk of triplet pregnancy and selective reduction, but this is very rare. Because of the risk of complications for the surrogate and babies in a twin pregnancy, prospective parents should consider the impact on medical costs and insurance.

Fresh vs frozen embryo transfer: is one better than the other?

Historically fresh cycles have experienced higher success rates than frozen cycles. This differential has been eliminated with our improved freezing technology (vitrification). Often chromosomal testing of embryos, Comprehensive Chromosome Screening (CCS) is only possible to do with a frozen cycle. Because not all clinics offer chromosomal testing it can be difficult to get a clear comparison on fresh vs frozen cycle success statistics, especially as this aspect is not captured on databases like SART. In the best



DR BANKOWSKI



ADVICE FROM DR BANKOWSKI



DR BANKOWSKI
IN HIS OFFICE

“Often prospective parents are hoping for twins through one surrogacy journey, including many gay male couples who each hope to be a genetic parent”

clinics, there is a small risk that a thawed embryo won't be viable, so ask a clinic about their thaw success rates. Frozen cycles are also logistically simpler for the donor, surrogate and prospective parents and offer flexibility that is not possible in a fresh cycle. Together this can help manage costs and minimise stress.

people contributing the egg and sperm are recessive carriers for a disease, then the baby may develop that disease. We counsel prospective parents beforehand on the results of this testing and where necessary this allows them to make choices, for example choosing another egg donor, so that risk of their baby having a genetic disease is ameliorated. Not all clinics test everyone that is contributing egg and sperm in this manner.

Not every embryo will carry the correct number of chromosomes — 23 pairs. Even in the case of a donor egg from a young woman, at least 25% of embryos will be chromosomally abnormal. An embryo with an abnormal number of chromosomes will either not develop if transferred, or may result in a baby with one of many conditions — most are incompatible with life but also include Down's Syndrome. It is only possible to test an embryo for the correct number of chromosomes prior to transfer using CCS, which is typically done with a precise procedure prior to freezing. Then an embryo tested for the correct number of chromosomes can be transferred increasing the chance of success and minimising the risk of abnormalities.

What's important to ask when looking at egg donor programs?

First, what level of screening have donors been

through before being included in a program? Many programs only do a cursory screening before prospective parents can select a donor, with further medical and genetic testing done at their expense. Prospective parents may go through several donors before they pass medical testing. Many programs do not do genetic screening or testing at all, and unless your clinic asks for it you won't have that information. At ORM our donors are fully medically and genetically screened beforehand by us and we only accept about 7% of those that apply.

Second, what level of information is available on the donor and does the program know her? Egg donor programs in-house to a clinic generally know their donors extremely well and if they have donated before they have the records of their prior donations, which increases the chances for success.

Third, what is the cost? Programs approach this in different ways and the cost of screening needs to be considered if not already done. Also important to understand is that success rates are generally higher with egg donation IVF than egg bank frozen eggs.

How can prospective parents improve their chances of success and a smooth process?

Creating a family is one of the most important endeavours you'll do in your lifetime. Do your homework first. Surround yourself with a team of service providers — IVF clinic, egg donor program, surrogacy agency, lawyers, etc. — that meet your individual needs, have the relevant expertise and that you trust. Select a clinic that is going to give you the best chance of success the first time. If the clinic has a representative in your area or past patients that you can talk with, I think that is very helpful. Stay connected through the process. It will be an amazing journey!

**CONTACT
DR BANKOWSKI**

To learn more and consult with Dr Bankowski contact ORM on ORMUK@PortlandIVF.net OregonReproductiveMedicine.com

Proud PARENTS

CRAIG AND MASSIMO HAVE BEEN TOGETHER FOR NEARLY 12 YEARS AND ARE THE PROUD AND LOVING PARENTS OF MARCO, WHO WAS BORN IN 2014 AND CONCEIVED THROUGH EGG DONOR SURROGACY IN THE USA

Like an increasing number of gay couples, Craig and Massimo wanted to be parents. They took the plunge and created their family through egg donor surrogacy in the USA. Craig and Massimo beam: "It was the best thing we've ever done."

Pride Life asked Craig and Massimo about their journey to parenthood.

When did you first think about starting a family?

"For me it seems like always — Craig took his time before getting broody but then it hit. Seeing parents with their children in our neighbourhood park we'd image how it would be for us," Massimo explains. "We were very busy with our careers and

were conscious that we'd have to change our lifestyle, as we always saw ourselves as being very involved. We started asking questions. Should we adopt or try surrogacy?"

"The definitive date was October 2009," remembers Craig. "We'd had dinner at our friends' wedding and met a gay couple who had just completed the adoption of their second child. The next morning over brunch we said, 'Right, we've been talking about this for a long time and we're not getting younger, let's seriously decide whether we're going to do it or not!'"

"We'd had a Bloody Mary — and then we had one more for courage!" Massimo jokes.

Why did you choose surrogacy?

"We considered adoption initially but then decided to focus on surrogacy as the route for us," Craig continues. "We had close friends in New York — gay dads with four kids through surrogacy — who had been encouraging us for ages, so we decided to explore surrogacy."

"I remember our first meeting with a US surrogacy agency — very 'American' — and I can say that as I'm half American!" he laughs. "But it seemed like everything was possible! It's firmly established there, all the resources to do it safely are in place, and it works well. It left us feeling empowered to make choices and shape our journey to parenthood as we hoped."

"We decided then and there that surrogacy was definitely what worked for us," Massimo adds. "But we were still very busy with work so it took another couple of years waiting for the right time, doing research, and talking to people before we got started. It's a complicated undertaking — a big jigsaw — and to try and understand the process, the pros and the cons of



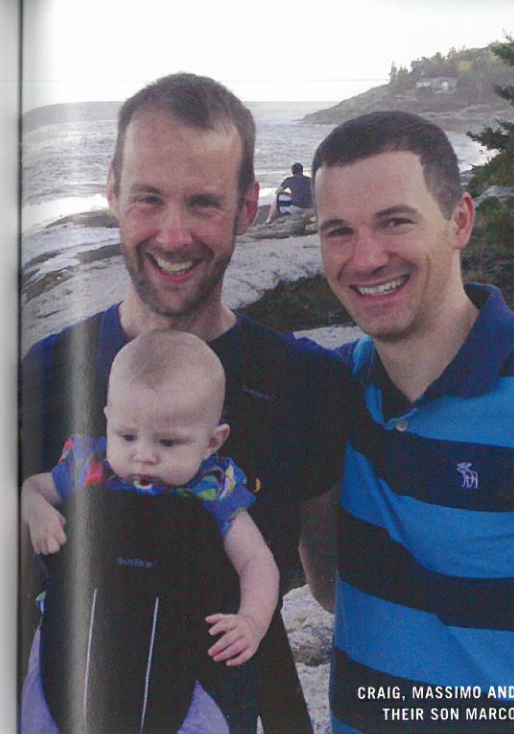
CRAIG AND MARCO

different options and the risks can be incredibly daunting and confusing."

"Initially we didn't know of anyone in London pursuing surrogacy," Craig explains. "But one by one we met people who were able to share with us their experiences and things they'd learned along the way. We made some great friends and playmates for Marco in the process. There are now more and more resources available to help people understand their options and navigate their journey which is great."

How did you go about choosing an egg donor and surrogate?

"We signed up to a US surrogacy agency who matched us with our surrogate. We researched



CRAIG, MASSIMO AND THEIR SON MARCO

"It comes naturally to you, wanting to look after your child"

and compared a lot of IVF clinics and selected the one we felt had consistently the best success rates and we found our egg donor through their in-house program," Craig explains.

"The surrogacy agency should try and find a mutual 'best-fit' between you and a surrogate based on many criteria: what you need on the legal front, how you will deal with insurance and medical costs, whether you are interested in trying for twins, your views on sensitive ethical and medical issues if there are complications during the pregnancy, what sort of relationship you hope for with your surrogate, and personality fit, to name a few. It's important to understand that it's very much a two-way process. We chose our surrogate as much as she chose us. It's an emotional journey so trust is essential for a good match. We've developed a close relationship with our surrogate as a result."

"Massimo gets the credit for finding our egg donor. After looking for a while you come to understand what's right for you in terms of a donor's background, personal and family medical and genetic profile, and physical appearance. We'd looked at lots of donor profiles over several weeks, then late one evening during our search Massimo insisted that we look again at our IVF clinic's donor database — as new donors become available. I was in the kitchen, then all of a sudden Massimo shouts, 'She's the one! Craig, quick call them NOW, it's afternoon in Portland — they'll be there!'"

"She had such a beautiful smile — I connected immediately. And everything else in her profile matched exactly for us," Massimo recalls.

Do you still keep in contact with your egg donor and surrogate?

"Yes, and we feel incredibly fortunate," Craig says. "They are simply extraordinary women. This past January we were able to get our egg donor and surrogate, ourselves and Marco together — it's as close to a 'nuclear' family as we can get — it was incredible."

"It's obvious that it wasn't just the two of us and that there were other people involved in bringing Marco into this world. They're not Marco's parents — that's not the intent — but we're all connected and they're a central part of his life-story that he will come to know."

"Everyone needs to make the choices that are right for their family in terms of the relationship they have with their egg donor and surrogate. For us it was important that both our egg donor and our surrogate be comfortable knowing about Marco, and comfortable with Marco knowing about them. They are great examples of strong and empowered women and they are incredibly loving with how they have helped us — we want Marco to know this."

How has being a parent changed your life?

"The moment your child is born your whole centre of gravity changes," says Craig. "You're taking on this immense lifelong responsibility and it's really no longer about you. But that's not a bad thing at all, quite the contrary. And you become very 'traditional' in that you worry and talk about the same things as other parents — nappies, childcare, schools."

"It does completely change your life," agrees Massimo. "It comes naturally to you, wanting to look after your child. It's hard work. Marco is learning to use a spoon now — mealtime is a total mess — but it's fun. Children are like moving targets — as soon as you think you've got it figured out they are already at the next level — but the rewards I get from Marco are just indescribable."

"I get this amazing feeling when Marco discovers or does something new. You get to a certain point in your life when you feel like



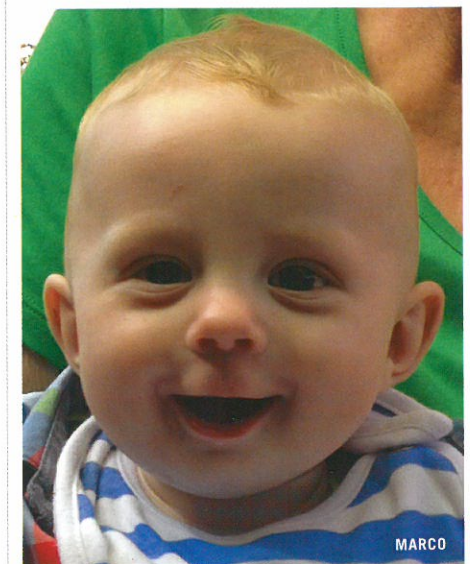
MARCO RELAXING

HELPING OTHERS ON THEIR JOURNEY

Craig and Massimo are happy to share their experience and help prospective parents understand the ins and outs of egg donor surrogacy and the many options available. "Many people helped us along the way, so it's right that we pass on what we've learned." Craig also now supports UK patients of Oregon Reproductive Medicine on their journeys and can be contacted on ORMUK@PortlandIVF.net

you've done everything so there's little really new, but through Marco's discoveries I get so much joy being with him in that moment. And we're only at the beginning. We have a whole lifetime of being able to witness Marco's development."

"Then Marco let's out a big laugh and smiles at you — and it is just amazing."



MARCO