



Oregon Reproductive Medicine

ORM DONORS | ORM SURROGACY | ORM GENOMICS

FERTILITY JOURNEYS: DONOR EGG IVF WITH GENOMIC SCREENING... WITH OREGON REPRODUCTIVE MEDICINE

After nearly ten years trying to build their family, Heather & Brandon are well on their way to becoming parents. They've selected their egg donor, received the amazing results of their egg donor's retrieval and are getting ready for Heather's transfer. We catch-up with the latest exciting steps in their journey.

Heather writes...

Selecting an egg donor has been an eye opening experience for me. Like for so many women with fertility journeys similar to mine, this process was a totally new concept for us and we wanted to identify an egg donor who would be the perfect fit for us. We didn't know quite what to expect, but having tried two IVF cycles unsuccessfully in the past using my own eggs, we were determined to find an egg donor who we felt resembled me physically, emotionally and spiritually.

We'd been advised that there are in general fewer available egg donors of minority ethnicities and that our search may therefore take longer. As both Brandon and I are light-skinned and of black heritage, we were hoping to find an egg donor of similar background.

When it was time to start looking the advice was correct and there was only one currently available donor of black heritage. She was beautiful, smart and well educated but as she was dark-skinned we were worried that a child from her donor egg and Brandon's sperm would not resemble us, both of us being lighter skinned. Additionally her genetic screening was not as good of a match for us so we politely declined matching with that donor and kept looking.

We kept an open mind, kept looking and were considering other egg donors who had more features associated with people of colour but who were not of black heritage. We were leaning towards one in particular, but we were struggling to make a

decision. While she had a wonderful profile, I didn't feel that connection I was hoping for.

Coincidentally enough, around this time I was scheduled for a consultation with one of ORM's genetic counsellors, Gena, to discuss the statistics associated with our planned procedure. She went through the success rates for a one embryo and a two embryo transfer with me by phone.

While we spoke casually towards the end of the call, I voiced my concerns that I hadn't made a selection yet of an egg donor. I told Gena how I was finding it difficult to find an egg donor who I felt looked like me and who I connected with.

Without hesitation, Gena shared that a new egg donor had joined the ORM program. I immediately logged on to the egg donor portal

while Gena guided me through the process over the phone of finding the new egg donor. As soon as I saw her I immediately began to cry.

This egg donor was beautiful. She looked like me. She had a wonderful smile and she had so many goals that were very similar to the goals that I set for myself at her age. She is a selfless giver, adventurous, determined to educate herself and persistent. She talked about how whatever goals she sets for herself, while it may take time and hard work to achieve them, she will reach those goals. As I read that statement from the question and answer section of her application, I said to myself, "I have found my match!"

Persistence has been one of my most important attributes and I found myself strongly connected to



this woman who was coming to the aid of people like me who are in need of the ultimate gift, a donor egg. To add to my strong connection to her, she said she loved seafood. Seafood is my favorite!

I contacted ORM's egg donor matching coordinator, Corby, right away to tell her that we'd found our donor! Corby happily agreed to set the wheels in motion!

We'd been saving for our retirement, but we took some of these funds to cover our egg donor's compensation and travel expenses so that our donor could start her preparations. We figured that the investment in building our family was more than worth it!

Our treatment coordinator, Christina, shared our egg donor's calendar with us. I'll always remember our egg donor's retrieval day, January 21st 2018. I had been praying all day that she was having a good day, feeling well, feeling encouraged about helping someone else. Fortunately, my prayers were answered.

On the retrieval day we heard that 38 eggs were retrieved. Incredible! About three weeks later after fertilisation, development of the embryos in the lab for 5 days, chromosomal screening and freezing we got the most amazing news.

We had 14 normal embryos (6 male and 8 female) to work with! Having had so many disappointments in the past, receiving such great

news on the number of embryos was an absolutely phenomenal feeling.

Now in preparation for my transfer it's been my turn. I have a calendar with daily medication dosages and times to take all dosages plastered around my home to ensure that I don't miss a beat. ORM sent me a package with all the medications I would need up until the transfer and this has lessened my stress level quite significantly.

On two occasions during past cycles, I was rushing to pharmacies before they closed and dealing with the panic of not knowing whether the pharmacy would have enough of the required medications for me to finish my cycle.

With this experience at ORM, the stress of the pharmacy has not been a concern.

I recently completed my first calendar request for blood work to monitor my hormone levels with great results. I have more blood work and scans to come before it's time to get on the plane back to ORM in Portland. I'm determined to follow the calendar to the letter.

I am also eating well, and doing 20 minutes of yoga and guided meditation every day to try and keep calm and not over analyze this process as my transfer day approaches.

We are hopeful, grateful and full of faith that this journey is headed in the right direction towards our goal of becoming parents! Next stop Portland!



Dr Barbieri
comments on
Heather
and **Brandon's**
journey

It is always a joyful occasion when we are able to give our patients such wonderful news as Heather and Brandon have received regarding the number of normal embryos they have from their donor egg cycle.

Picking an egg donor is a very personal choice, and it is important for patients to feel comfortable with their selection. As in Heather's case, many time patients tell us that they knew instinctively when they had found the right egg donor.

At ORM our egg donor profiles contain a comprehensive set of information including: adult and childhood photos, physical characteristics, education and career, interests, personal qualities, prior egg donation experience and outcomes, reasons for donating, compensation and travel reimbursement (if any required), openness to contact (anonymous, semi-open via the Donor Sibling Registry, or open), general health history, reproductive health history, family description and family health history.

In addition, our patients are provided an egg donor's genetic disorder carrier screening results and a comprehensive Genetic Information and Family Tree (GIFT) summary, which is unique to ORM and is prepared by one of ORM's genetic counselors. This assessment helps patients interpret the genetic risks present in a donor's family history. This also provides a record of the donor's family medical history that can be relied-upon in the future if needed.

Heather is now preparing for her transfer. She's being diligent about her medications protocol while continuing to look after her general health and diet, as well as her mental well-being.

An optimistic outlook makes such a positive difference in our patients' experience. Heather and Brandon have every reason to be optimistic and I am confident that they will have the best possible chance for success in building the family they hope for.

The entire team at ORM is so looking forward to having Heather and Brandon back in Portland for their upcoming transfer!

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