

Surrogacy is an arrangement where a woman carries and delivers a child for another couple or person.

THE FACTS ABOUT: Surrogacy

What is Surrogacy?

Surrogacy is an arrangement where a woman carries and delivers a child for another couple or person. The person carrying the pregnancy is referred to as the birth parent or surrogate, the persons for whom the child is intended are referred to as the intended parents.

Some forms of surrogacy involve an IVF procedure. An embryo is created using an egg and sperm from the intended parents (in some cases donor eggs or donor sperm may also be utilised). The embryo is then transferred into the uterus of the birth mother with the aim of achieving a pregnancy and carrying the intended parents' child.

Legal requirements

All surrogacy arrangements must be of an altruistic nature and comply with current Queensland Law or relevant legislation in the state in which you reside. Commercial surrogacy, where a surrogate receives payment for carrying a pregnancy is illegal and a criminal offence in Australia.

If you are considering undergoing fertility treatment using a surrogate, our Nurse Coordinators at Life Fertility Clinic will be able to assist you in understanding all the arrangements that need to be in place before treatment can commence, including counselling obligations.

Who might consider Surrogacy

The surrogacy process may be considered for the **intended parents** when the female has:

- Functioning ovaries but no uterus.
- A medical reason rendering her incapable of carrying a pregnancy, and/or would place her or any child at risk.
- Had many unsuccessful attempts at IVF and embryo transfers.
- A history of repeated miscarriage.

In order to take part in a surrogacy arrangement, the intended parents must:

- Be aged 25 years or older.
- Be a resident in Queensland, or if residing in another state of Australia must comply with that state's surrogacy legislation.
- Have no criminal convictions.

The surrogacy process may be considered for the **Birth parent** if:

- The birth parent and her partner (if appropriate) are twenty-five years of age or older.
- They do not abuse any drugs or alcohol.
- They are healthy and do not have a history of pregnancy-related illnesses or complications.
- They have no criminal convictions.

In general the surrogacy process may be considered if neither the birth mother nor intended parents suffer from any significant psychiatric disorder.

Singles and same-sex relationships

Treatment involving donated eggs and/or sperm can be co-ordinated by Life Fertility Clinic. Single people and same-sex couples can therefore be considered for surrogacy under the same criteria as heterosexual patients.

Finding a surrogate

Life Fertility Clinic cannot assist in the process of finding a surrogate. In Queensland it is illegal to advertise for a surrogate or for a person willing to be a surrogate to advertise.

Life Fertility Clinic cannot facilitate treatment in Australia or overseas involving commercial surrogacy arrangements.



Surrogacy step by step

Medical consultation

The intended parent(s) and birth parent (and egg donor/sperm donor if required) must attend a consultation with a Fertility Specialist at Life Fertility Clinic.

Counselling

Counselling is required for both the intended parent(s), birth parent(s), and any egg and/or sperm donor involved.

Independent legal advice

Both parties must have evidence of having had independent legal advice regarding their rights and obligations.

Legal requirements / Surrogacy arrangement

A signed surrogacy arrangement, as prepared by your legal representative, must be provided to Life Fertility Clinic prior to commencing your surrogacy treatment cycle.

Life Fertility Clinic Nurse consultation

All parties must attend a consultation with an IVF Nurse Coordinator prior to commencing a treatment cycle.

IVF treatment cycle

The intended parents will undergo an IVF treatment cycle using their own or a donor's eggs. The eggs are collected and fertilised with the intended parent's (or donor) sperm and the embryos cultured in the lab for 5 or 6 days to the blastocyst stage at which point best embryos are cryopreserved.

The embryo will be thawed and transferred into the uterus of the birth mother after the recommended six months' quarantine period for infectious diseases.

Ongoing pregnancy care

Once pregnancy is confirmed, ongoing counselling will be required for all parties involved in the surrogacy arrangement.

Birth

The baby is deemed to be the child of the birth mother until a parentage order is obtained through the Court under the *Queensland Surrogacy Act 2010* by the intended parents.

Life Fertility Clinic takes pride in providing a comprehensive approach to patients requiring surrogacy treatment. We understand that each surrogacy treatment is a unique plan and our IVF Nurse Coordinators and Scientists at Life Fertility Clinic are highly skilled, and have extensive knowledge of the management of surrogacy cycles. All staff at Life Fertility Clinic are well equipped to provide the individualised care and support to guide you through your surrogacy journey to achieve your goal of taking home a baby.

If you have any further additional questions regarding Life Fertility Clinic's Surrogacy programme, please contact one of our IVF Nurse Coordinators.

NB: All advice in this document is in accordance with the current *Queensland Surrogacy Act 2010* and any relevant legislation pertaining to surrogacy or family law in the State of Queensland.

Contact Life Fertility Clinic

The friendly and professional team at Life Fertility Clinic are eager to help and support any questions about our surrogacy program.