



BORN

1997

SIMSIVF

ADVANCED FERTILITY CARE



New Beginnings

Egg Donation Programme

Contents

Introduction	02
Could You Benefit From Egg Donation?	04
Reasons To Come To Sims For Egg Donation	06
The Sims IVF Egg Donation Package	07
Identifiable Donors	08
How Egg Donation Works	10
Stage 1: Consultation	11
Stage 2: Investigations & Counselling	12
Stage 3: Documentation Review, Consent Signing & Sperm Freeze	14
Stage 4: Donor Allocation	17
Stage 5: Donor Cycle, Fertilisation & Embryo Freezing	17
Stage 6: Embryo Transfer	18
Stage 7: Cycle Outcome	19
The Support & Resources You Need	20
Coming to Dublin	22
Legal Implications of Egg Donation	25
Questions about our Egg Donation Programme	26
Our Clinics	30





New Beginnings Happen Every Day at Sims IVF

Our egg donation programme is a streamlined process, conducted to the highest possible standards of care. Our staff, from the fertility specialists who are recognised experts in their field, to the nurses and midwives who are your guides during your journey, do everything they can to ensure you have a positive experience.

When you come for a consultation at Sims IVF, your fertility specialist will discuss the various fertility treatment options with you. Egg Donation may be one of those options.

If you decide to proceed to the next stage, your fertility specialist will refer you to one of our Egg Donation Co-ordinators. Our Co-ordinators are there to support you all along the journey, from first call to final scan.

Could You Benefit From Egg Donation?

Egg donation has become an increasingly popular choice for couples who have exhausted other options and yet have still failed to conceive. This is because egg donation has significantly higher chances of success than performing IVF with the woman's own eggs.

You will find that egg donation also gives you a very strong opportunity for biological and developmental relationships within your family because donor eggs are fertilised with the male partner's sperm, matured to the embryonic stage and then placed in the female's uterus.

It therefore gives you the same experience of pregnancy as natural conception.

Women who do not produce eggs or those with poor quality eggs may be advised to seek treatment with donated eggs.

In vitro fertilisation (IVF) involves fertilisation of a woman's eggs with her partner's sperm in the laboratory. The resulting embryos are placed in the womb 2-6 days later. If they implant, the embryo may develop into a pregnancy.

Unfortunately, some women are unable to provide eggs suitable for IVF. There are a number of reasons why this may occur:

- The ovaries never developed properly e.g. Turner's Syndrome
- Premature menopause (before the age of 40)
- Ovarian damage following surgery, radiation or chemotherapy
- Previous surgical removal of the ovaries
- Repeated failure to respond to ovarian stimulation in an IVF programme
- History of recurrent miscarriage
- Where the woman is a carrier of a genetic disease, such as muscular dystrophy or haemophilia
- If you are considering our New Beginnings Egg Donation Programme, we recommend that you meet with us for an initial consultation.





Reasons To Come To Sims For Egg Donation



-
- We offer identifiable donation
 - Costs are all-inclusive
 - One to one donation
 - There is no international travel involved
 - All our staff are English speaking
 - You get a dedicated, personal service from our Egg Donation Programme Co-ordinators

The Sims IVF Egg Donation Package

Our egg donation Co-ordinators will be happy to go through the elements of the New Beginnings Donation package with you at any time.

Our package includes

- All initial routine blood testing
- All laboratory costs including semen analysis, semen freeze, ICSI and Blastocyst Culture
- Storage costs of any frozen embryos for a period of one year
- One recipient transfer cycle
- Donor costs
- Donor medications
- One to one donation, meaning that eggs retrieved from the donor for your cycle are entirely yours and not split between you and other recipients
- Shipment of gamete and embryos, saving you the cost of travel, accommodation and time off work
- Implications Counselling
- Saline Infusion Sonogram

Ensuring a good match

The New Beginnings Egg Donation Programme provides you with an allocation of one donor profile including physical characteristics. Our donation team can also use head and full length shots of you and your partner, along with your physical characteristics to find the best possible matches from their pool of donors.

Our donors

Our pool of egg donors come forward voluntarily because of a desire to help others.

There is no incentive other than compensation for expense, time, inconvenience and risks involved in the procedure.

The egg donors understand that the main objective of the medical procedure is to enable another female to carry and deliver a child that they could not otherwise conceive. All treatment is confidential for both parties.

Donor fertility & health

Egg donors must be fit and healthy and between the ages of 18 and 35 years. The donors are screened for problems relating to family health history and transmissible infectious diseases and must consent to their eggs being donated. Each donor goes through a testing regime as follows:

Initial donor assessment

The below tests are carried out.

- Blood tests are taken and analysed for major diseases including HIV, Syphilis, Hepatitis and Cystic Fibrosis and karyotyping. The donor is accepted onto the programme only if the results are negative.
- Screening at time of donation cycle. A second screening takes place for diseases including HIV, hepatitis and syphilis. Donation only takes place if all results of tests are negative.
- The donor receives a psychological evaluation and counselling before her eggs are removed for the purposes of egg donation.

Identifiable Donors

Legislation brought in May 2020 will only allow for identifiable donors. Many families feel that using an identifiable donor allows them to build trust and confidence in their relationship with their child, and ensures that their child need have no doubts about their genetic heritage. This can be important for the child's sense of identity, but can also be relevant medically and socially.

It is the responsibility of recipient to get contact with Sims after the birth of children born using identifiable gametes for family creation.

The donor is identifiable, which means that any child/ children resulting from this treatment will have the right to access identifying information about their donor from the age of 18 should they request it. However, identifying information about the donor will not be made available to you, the recipient couple.

The donor will not be provided with any information about you, and will not have any right to access information about any child resulting from the treatment.

Importantly, neither the donor nor the partner of the donor has any claim on or obligation towards any resulting children.

This means that you and your partner are deemed to be the sole parents and guardians of the child and your names are on the child's birth certificate.

Neither the donor nor the partner of the donor has any claim on or obligation towards any resulting children







How Egg Donation Works

New Beginnings Egg Donation involves seven key stages and they are: Consultation, Investigations and Counselling, Sperm Freeze, Donor Allocation, Donor Cycle, Embryo Transfer and then your Outcome.

STAGE 1: CONSULTATION

Meet your Fertility Specialist

When you come for a consultation at Sims IVF, your first step is to meet a Sims IVF fertility specialist. Your consultant will discuss the various fertility treatment options available with you.

Egg Donation may be the most appropriate choice for you. This will depend on a number of factors including:

- AMH levels (ovarian reserve)
- Previous fertility treatment
- Medical history

When recommending egg donation as an option, your Sims IVF consultant will brief you on:

- The egg donation programmes available
- Risks associated with egg donation
- Risks associated with fertility treatment

If you decide to proceed to the next stage, your doctor will refer you to our dedicated Egg Donation team.

Meet your egg donation coordinators

Your Egg Donation Coordinator will have expertise in egg donation. Entirely dedicated to our egg donation programmes, our coordinators will be your link to Sims IVF, providing expert care for you and ensuring that you are supported and informed throughout the process.



At the onset the egg donation team will link with you on the following steps.

The following areas will be discussed:

- Explanation of the programme including potential outcomes and risks
- Information on tests, investigations and counselling required for the recipient couple
- Explanation of how to complete the Recipient Characteristics Form
- Explanation of the donor process including criteria, testing and treatment cycle
- Step-by-step treatment plan
- Programme costs and timing of payment
- Opportunity for you to ask any questions about the process

Your coordinator will also provide you with detailed consent forms. These forms highlight and invite you to consider all potential outcomes and complications associated with egg donation. The areas covered include:

- Screening (EU Cell and Tissue Directive)
- Mandatory Counselling
- Programme costs and paying for your programme
- Donor matching
- Possible surplus embryo freezing
- Risks associated with egg donation including shipping
- Risks of failure
- Risks to the child

The Egg Donation Coordinator will advise you to review and complete the consent forms at home as they require both time and consideration.

These forms should be ready to review at the Consents signing appointment (Stage 3) where you will have an opportunity to discuss them further prior to committing to the programme



STAGE 2: INVESTIGATIONS & COUNSELLING

A number of standard tests and investigations are required for both partners prior to proceeding with the programme. All the tests below are included in the cost of the programme.



Egg Donation Coordinators will explain these tests and assist you with booking them at the initial stage.

In some cases your doctor might recommend additional testing prior to your treatment cycle. Any additional testing required will be charged per item.

Counselling

Implications counselling is a mandatory legal requirement for all couples wishing to avail of egg donation. Counselling is essential for both partners before the treatment begins. The process helps you to explore any questions and concerns you might have regarding the use of donor eggs to achieve a family. In addition, counselling often raises issues that a couple might not have considered previously.

Sims IVF provides experienced fertility counsellors who are familiar with the complex issues and implications involved in undergoing egg donation.

Implications Counselling offers a service to recipient patients where they can express issues and feelings about proposed egg or sperm donation. Issues specific to donor conception are explored, such as, disclosure versus non-disclosure to family, friends or anyone else who may be affected by such treatment, either in the present or in the future. It also provides a therapeutic space for the patient to reflect on the experience of letting go of the hope of having a genetically shared child and the meaning of building a family with donation.

The issue of choosing disclosure or non-disclosure for a potential child (egg or sperm donation) are also focused on. Implications Counselling aims to support patients in making a conscious and informed decision about donor-conception.

Female Investigations

- Female Tests
- Infectious screening bloods
- Basic hormone tests
- Rubella immunity
- Ultrasound Investigation: Saline Infusion Sonography (SIS).

This test assesses two major factors that can influence the success of treatment; the ease of embryo transfer and the condition of the uterine cavity. The test provides useful information to ensure the inside of the womb appears normal and that embryos can be transferred easily and safely.

Sims IVF provides experienced fertility counsellors who are familiar with the complex issues and implications involved in undergoing egg donation.

Male investigations

The egg donation programme is very much dependent on both the male and female partner for its success. Male factors that could significantly reduce your chances of success include:

- Being a smoker
- Lifestyle

Male tests

- Semen Freeze
- Infectious screening bloods

Return consultation

Once all investigations are complete you will have a consultation with your doctor to discuss the results and finalize your treatment plan. This can take place on the phone or in person. The Egg Donation Coordinator will advise you about arranging this.

STAGE 3: DOCUMENTATION REVIEW, CONSENT SIGNING & SPERM FREEZE

Consents Signing

Prior to the Consents appointment you will receive a call from the Egg Donation Team to confirm your wish to proceed and to advise you of any additional requirements. You will also be reminded to attend with the Consent forms completed (except the last page).

At the Consents appointment you will meet with an Egg Donation Coordinator who will review the consent forms with you. The Coordinator will again highlight the main risks associated with the programme. You will also have an opportunity to ask any questions you have regarding the programme. Once you have confirmed you are happy to proceed, the final sign off of the consent forms will take place and you can progress to the next stage of the programme.

In order to facilitate the donor selection process we will also ensure you are satisfied with your completed Recipient Characteristics Form.

This form records information about the physical characteristics (hair colour, eye colour, height, build, ethnicity) of both partners and any other relevant information you wish to include.

Semen freeze if using partner sperm

To ensure that the optimum sample is produced, semen freeze should be carried out following 3 days of abstinence from intercourse or masturbation. Usually only one semen sample is required to be frozen but this does depend on the

quality of the sperm obtained. You will be advised by the team at Sims if a subsequent sample is required.

Once the semen sample is received a basic semen analysis is performed in our laboratory. The sample is then frozen in advance of shipment to our partner clinic to be used for fertilization of the donor eggs. A test thaw of the frozen sample is performed in Sims prior to shipment to ensure the sample is suitable for use in this programme.

Transport of frozen sperm

Frozen semen samples are transported by air in a temperature controlled container to our partner clinic. Samples are accompanied at all times by an experienced specialised courier until they are delivered to our partner laboratory. Every effort is taken to minimise any risk to samples during the transport process.

Once all consents have been signed and the semen sample has been frozen the donor allocation process can begin.





STAGE 4: DONOR ALLOCATION

Your completed characteristics form and photos will be shared securely with our partner clinic. The donor allocation team, comprised of experienced egg donation professionals, will use this information to select **one** compatible donor for you.

A profile of the donor including physical characteristics will be made available to you. You will have the opportunity to review the donor allocation to determine if it is best suited to your needs. You will then be advised to communicate your decision with the Egg Donation team.

Once you have approved the donor, work in our partner clinic commences.

NB: Please note that donor allocation can be only be provided once full payment has been received

STAGE 5: DONOR CYCLE, FERTILISATION & EMBRYO FREEZING

Once accepted to the programme, the egg donors are usually keen to start treatment as soon as possible. We do however allow a timeline of up to 8 weeks (approx. 2 period cycles) from the time of confirmation to the start of their stimulation cycle. You will receive a call from the Egg Donation team to inform you when your **embryos have been created**.

The donor will commence ovarian stimulating medications and undergo regular monitoring of her response to the treatment. Once the medical team in our partner clinic deems her response appropriate, the egg collection procedure is planned.

There is a small possibility that the donor may not respond to her treatment and therefore no eggs become available. Thankfully this happens rarely but if no eggs are available you will be provided with another donor allocation form as soon as possible.

Egg collection

Eggs are retrieved from a donor by means of transvaginal egg retrieval.

This involves the introduction of a specially designed needle through the vaginal wall

under local anesthesia and intravenous sedation.

Once egg collection is complete a process called ICSI then takes place. ICSI improves the chances of pregnancy by helping embryologists to identify the best sperm to use to fertilize the donor eggs. One sperm is then injected into each individual egg with the aim of creating fertilized oocytes.

Eggs that fertilize successfully are then called embryos. The embryos are cultured in the laboratory for 5–6 days until they reach a stage called blastocyst. The blastocyst embryos are then frozen by a process called Vitrification in preparation for shipping to Sims by specialist courier.

You will receive a call from the Egg Donation team when your final embryo number is known. At this stage we will advise you of the next steps and plan for your embryo transfer.



STAGE 6: EMBRYO TRANSFER

Preparing for the Embryo Transfer

Once you have been informed of your total embryo number, preparation for your embryo transfer cycle begins. This will be organised by one of the Egg Donation Coordinators. A 1-2 month treatment schedule is set up and a prescription for specific uterine preparation medications is arranged.

We want to ensure that the embryos are placed in the womb at the optimal time for implantation. The treatment plan and medications required to achieve this in your individual case will be determined by your fertility specialist. Typically oestrogen tablets are commenced followed by the addition of progesterone medication to prepare the lining of the womb to receive the embryos.

Ultrasound scans are carried out following commencement of the hormone tablets so that the lining of the uterus can be assessed in advance of the embryo transfer. If the uterine lining is satisfactory, an additional hormone – progesterone – is taken as advised. This ensures that the lining is in the best possible condition for implantation of the embryos.

The Embryos are thawed on the morning of embryo transfer in preparation for transfer into the uterus. They are replaced through the neck of the womb using a small plastic tube.

This is usually a painless procedure rather like having a cervical smear test and it takes approximately 10 minutes to perform.

Following embryo transfer, the hormone tablets and progesterone medication are continued daily as indicated in your treatment schedule. These hormones reflect the changes that normally occur in a woman's body at this time. While the hormone supplements are being taken, a period will not usually occur. However, this does not necessarily mean pregnancy has begun.

12 days after the embryo transfer, you will be advised to do a pregnancy test to establish if you are pregnant.

N.B. Your first embryo transfer is included in the all-inclusive package price. Subsequent transfers will be charged as frozen embryo transfer cycles.

STAGE 7: CYCLE OUTCOME

On the date provided for your pregnancy test you may opt to do a home pregnancy test. If you wish to do so, we recommend you use either Clear Blue or First Response testing kits as they are capable of detecting early pregnancies.

Regardless of the result of a home pregnancy test we ask that you attend for a blood test to confirm if you are pregnant or not. This blood test will routinely be done in the morning and you will receive a call from the Egg Donation team later the same day with the result.

Pregnant

When a positive result is confirmed an Egg Donation Coordinator will advise you regarding your medications and early pregnancy care, and will book you in for your first obstetric scan at approximately 7 weeks. The Egg Donation team understands what a special and important time this is for you both. Our coordinators are available to offer guidance and support throughout the first 12 weeks of pregnancy until your care is referred to an obstetric team.

Please note that on some occasions the pregnancy blood test result might be inconclusive. For example a level of pregnancy

hormone might be detected but that level is lower than expected based on the date of your embryo transfer. In this instance the Egg Donation Coordinator will advise you regarding repeating the test and the possible outcomes of the cycle.

Not pregnant?

Although we use high quality eggs there is unfortunately no guarantee of a positive outcome. We understand that a negative test result is very disappointing for both partners and our Egg Donation coordinators are available to support you at this difficult time. You will be advised regarding your medications and about arranging a return consultation with your Sims consultant to discuss future options. If either of you feel you need additional support at this stage our specialist counsellor is also available for a session by phone or in person.

The Egg Donation team understands what a special and important time this is for you both. Our coordinators are available to offer guidance and support throughout the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

The Support & Resources you need



Online patients resource area

We have set up a Patients Resource Area on our website: www.sims.ie to give you guidance through your treatment.

This resource gives you useful information including frequently asked questions, video demonstrations on how to take injections and any forms that you need to fill out.

The Patients Resource Area is unique to patients of Sims IVF and was developed based on patient feedback and insights.

Counselling

Any fertility treatment is very emotional and egg donation is no different. For most couples, the most difficult time is not the technical period, but the waiting involved. Most couples tend to overestimate the technical demands of fertility treatment and underestimate the emotional demands.

Sims IVF offer a range of counselling services. This is booked directly through reception.

Counselling available includes; Therapeutic Counselling for individuals or couples, Counselling if a patient experiences a negative outcome and/or Implications Counselling, for patients requiring the use of donor sperm or donor eggs (mandatory).

Referral by your GP or gynaecologist

If you have been referred to Sims IVF by your doctor or gynaecologist, it is our policy to keep them informed of your progress. If not, we will stay in contact with your GP, unless it is your express wish that we do not. We believe that you ought to be given as much support as possible when undergoing fertility treatment and that your doctor can help you to manage your treatment.



Medications

Once you have agreed to initiate treatment, you will be given a prescription for medications.

We recommend that you procure your medication from specialist pharmacies with specific training and expertise in IVF and fertility medication. Sims can provide you with a list of these.

Research has shown that dealing with a pharmacy that is experienced in the area of prescribed fertility medication can assist in the success of the treatment. The reasons for this are simple: a pharmacy that is well briefed on the types of medication required, the issues involved and the back-up service needed for patients will deliver a better service to our patients.

Any experienced pharmacist can also provide the necessary guidance to ensure that you are clear on when and how to take your various medications.

Of course, patients may use a pharmacy of choice unless the consultant specifically recommends otherwise for professional reasons

Drugs Payment Scheme

If you are an Irish resident, most fertility medications are covered under the DPS (Drug Payment Scheme). To qualify for the scheme and to get the latest updates on your entitlements, visit www.hse.ie for information on how to apply for same.

Private health insurance

Some of the major healthcare providers cover aspects of fertility treatment. It is possible that they may cover consultations and/or some investigations or tests. For more information, contact your health insurance company directly.

Tax relief

Keep all invoices as these are tax deductible and it may be possible to reclaim them under the Med 1 scheme. Further information and forms are available at www.revenue.ie

Coming to Dublin:

Our Service for Overseas Patients. Patients from the UK and other countries outside Ireland.

If you are travelling to Sims IVF from outside Ireland, we will endeavour to minimise the number of times you must travel to Dublin by carrying out as much testing and treatment as is appropriate at each of your visits to us. For example, you may speak to the fertility specialist, the Egg Donation Programme Coordinator and the Counsellor via phone or online consultation.

Once your initial appointments are complete, you will generally find that you only need to travel to Ireland for treatment. Most other procedures such as follow-up scans can usually be done locally.

Travel requirements are kept to a minimum, for couples joining the Egg Donation Programme from abroad.

Clearly there are individual aspects of care for your case that will alter according to your circumstances. These should be discussed with the Sims IVF Consultant or with one of the Egg Donation Co-ordinators to make the process as simple and straightforward as possible

Travel requirements are kept to a minimum, for couples joining the Egg Donation Programme from abroad.







Legal Implications of Egg Donation

How is egg donation treated legally?

The following information is the Sims IVF interpretation of legal advice that we received regarding egg donation. It is not a substitute for legal advice regarding your own particular circumstances or planned treatment. We recommend that you obtain independent legal advice if you plan to embark on treatment through our egg donation programmes.

- Gamete (Egg or Sperm) donation is legal and constitutional under Irish law. Gamete donation began in Ireland as sperm donation. It has been available in Ireland for over 30 years. Egg donation became available in Ireland in 2000. There has been no adverse case law to date.
- Under the Children and Family Right Bill 2015 and the proposed Assisted Human Reproduction Regulation Authority Legislation, since May 2020 all donation programmes (sperm egg or embryo) must only use identifiable donors, and a national Donor Registry has been established. Please note that prior to attending for any embryo transfer procedure you will be asked to complete a form called SI545. This forms a legal document and a requirement in Ireland prior to any donor treatments and provides your consent to have your details, the details of your treatment and the outcome of your treatment entered onto the Irish donor registry which is maintained by the Department of Health. If you are successful, it also commits you to disclosing your child's full name, date of birth and place of birth to Sims IVF, again for entry onto the registry. Once we receive your child's details Sims IVF will issue you with a copy of this SI545 form you signed prior to your successful embryo transfer and an additional form, SI 546, which will allow you to fully register the birth of your child. When any child born as a result of a successful egg donation cycle reaches the age of 18 years or older, they will then be able to query the Irish donor registry and the egg donor's identifying information will be released to them.
- A donor is informed very clearly that when they donate, they give up all rights to the eggs and to any children born of those eggs. Equally, they have no responsibility for such children.
- Under the New Beginnings Egg Donation Programme the donor is identifiable to any children resulting from treatment. It is intended however that the donor will not be able to contact any resulting children unless they initiate contact.
- Any child resulting from the programme may access the donor register if they so wish once they reach the age of 18.
- If you are located outside Ireland then the laws of your jurisdiction will apply in relation to registration of birth.



Questions about our Egg Donation Programme

There are full contact details on the back of this Guide. You will immediately be referred to our Patient Coordinators who will schedule an initial appointment with one of our Consultants.



Q1. What is the timescale from starting to completion of a donor egg cycle?

The timetable can vary. It is dependent on donor recruitment and a number of other factors.

Q2. Are there donors available and what information is made available to us?

Yes, there are donors available. The New Beginnings Egg Donation Programme provides you with an allocation of one detailed donor profile including physical characteristics such as hair and eye colour, height, weight and blood group. Both of these donors will have been assessed to ensure they are a suitable donor for you.

Detailed information will be transferred to the National Donor Conceived Persons Register and will be available to any resulting children once they reach the age of 18.

Q3. Is there independent verification of the samples during this treatment?

As with any fertility treatment involving sperm and eggs there are established clinical and laboratory systems for verification. These principles of good laboratory practice apply both in Ireland and in Europe. Any partner clinic will be authorised by their national regulator, and required to maintain that authorisation.

Q4. Are the European Egg donors paid?

Donors are compensated for expenses incurred and for their time and inconvenience as well as the risks of the procedures involved in donating eggs.

Q5. Then why do they donate?

For similar reasons as to why Irish women donate – altruism plays a significant part. This is particularly the case for donors who have had children of their own and therefore understand the pleasure that children and family life can bring. In addition many donors have had family members or friends who have undergone fertility treatment and they have witnessed the life changing joy such treatment can bring.

Q6. Can you tell us about the donors who have



been recruited for the New Beginnings Egg Donation Programme?

They are screened according to internationally recognised standards – including the EU Tissue and Cells Directive.

All donors have agreed to sign away all legal rights and responsibilities to the eggs, to the embryos and to any potential child resulting from the programme. The donor knows that they are identifiable and understand that any child resulting from the egg donation may receive details about them from the National Donor Conceived Persons Register. The donor however will not receive any information regarding you as a recipient or that of any resulting children.

Q7. Can you tell me about infectious screening of the donors?

There is a testing process in place for all donors. This involves screening at separate points during the donation process for HIV, Hepatitis B and C. Whilst not infectious, all donors are also screened for Cystic Fibrosis and Karyotyping.

Q11. How does the New Beginnings Egg Donation Programme compare to programmes in Europe?

There are a number of specific benefits to this programme. Firstly, there is less travel involved for recipients which helps to reduce the stress and the expense of treatment.

We have also incorporated Blastocyst culture to further improve the results.

Finally, with regard to costs, the overall cost of the programme is all-inclusive.

Q12. If this treatment does take place in Ireland, there will presumably not be a fresh embryo transfer. Will this factor reduce the chance of success for us?

No. The transfer is a frozen Blastocyst transfer following thawing of the embryos. Frozen blastocyst transfers are routinely carried out in IVF centres worldwide with good success rates.

Recent research indicates that they are just as successful as fresh embryo transfers. This should not impact the chances of success for you.

For more detailed information please see our website: www.sims.ie





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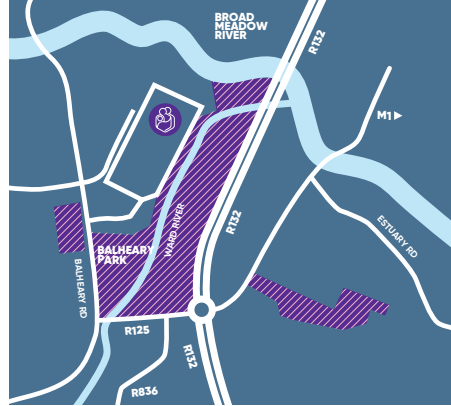
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Our Clinics



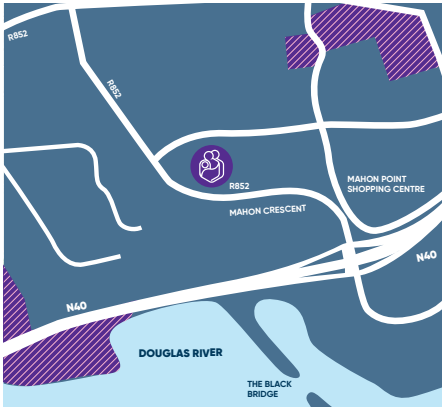
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We are an Academic Unit providing teaching for the students of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.



Our Quality Management System is accredited to the standard of I.S. EN ISO 9001 by the National Standards Associated of Ireland.

Follow Us On



Directions to our Clinics are also available on our website www.sim.s.ie



Born in 1997