

Information for parents of donor-conceived people

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Application to the Central Register



June 2018

From anonymity to openness

When donor conception was first practised, sperm and egg donations were made anonymously. However, experience has shown that donor-conceived people, their parents and donors often want to learn more about one another and are willing to share information about themselves. People may be interested to know about medical history, personality, appearance, hobbies and interests. The way in which people connected by donor treatment exchange information and/or have contact will depend on the wishes of those involved.

VARTA manages the Central Register and can provide support and information to all parties affected by applications. Assistance with the initial exchange of information or contact can also be provided.

Information for parents of donor-conceived children/people born from a donation since 1998

Parents are entitled to apply to the Central Register to seek identifying information about their child's egg or sperm donor; however, identifying information can only be released with the donor's consent.

Note: a donor-conceived person is entitled to this information when they turn 18 years of age or younger if a VARTA counsellor considers them to be sufficiently mature.

Information for parents of donor-conceived people born before 1998

If the parent of a donor-conceived person born from a donation before 1998 lodges an application, consent must be obtained from the donor to release their identifying information. If the donor does not consent, then identifying information will not be released. The donor is also given the opportunity to put a contact preference in place to specify how they would like contact to occur. Donors can also specify to have 'no contact'. A donor may also lodge a contact preference to regulate any contact with their child/ren who are younger than 18 years.

A parent making an application must sign an undertaking to comply with any contact preference lodged by the donor. Penalties may apply if this is breached.

Note: The descendant(s) of a donor-conceived person can obtain identifying information without the donor's consent providing they sign an undertaking to comply with any contact preference lodged by the donor.

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Process

1. **A parent submits an application** to the Central Register for information about the donor to VARTA. Application forms can be found on the VARTA website and can be completed online or printed and posted to VARTA.
2. VARTA will then **search** for the donor. If VARTA is unable to locate them, it can use the services of a specialist agency that has expertise in locating people.
3. The applicant will be required to attend a free **information and support session** with a donor-linking counsellor from VARTA. The session helps the applicant explore the implications for all parties affected by their application. **It is not an assessment.**
4. Together with the help of the counsellor the applicant writes a **Statement of reasons** which explains why they have applied and their hopes and aspirations for contact/information exchange in the short and long term.
5. **The Statement of reasons is then forwarded to the donor.** It helps the donor to understand the unique situation and the preferences of the person who has applied for information.
6. The donor is invited to attend an information and support session and asked whether they would like to consent to release identifying information.
7. **If the donor consents, identifying information about the donor, including name and date of birth, is released to the applicant, so long as they provide an undertaking to comply with any contact preferences lodged.** If the donor is open to exchanging information or meeting, the counsellor can help with the initial stages of the connection.
8. **If a donor is not located,** identifying information cannot be released unless the applicant provides an undertaking not to contact the donor and to provide VARTA with any information subsequently received from which the donor may be located.

Fee for Central Register applications

Payment of a \$74.85 fee per application for information is required.

Contact VARTA

During the application process, VARTA staff will remain neutral and respectful of people's choices and opinions, **maintaining confidentiality at all times.**

For further information:

Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority

Phone: (03) 8601 5250

Email: dcrs@varta.org.au

Web: www.varta.org.au