

Information for pre-1998 sperm or egg donors

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Contact as a result of a Central Register application
by a donor-conceived person



June 2017

Thinking it over

Being contacted as a result of an application by your donor offspring to the Central Register for your identifying information may be unexpected, particularly if you donated under the understanding of anonymity.

You may not have given much thought to the donations you made many years ago, but perhaps you have wondered whether children had been born as a result and if so how many, what age, and gender they are. You may have wondered whether they resemble you or if you share personality traits. It is possible that you may not have told your partner, children, or wider family about your donation.

While the applicant may have considered their application and its consequences for some time, you are likely to need to think through the implications of this application for you and those close to you.

Why do donor-conceived people apply for information?

Knowing where you come from is important for many people as reflected in the popularity of building family trees and visiting ancestral homes. Some donor-conceived people want genetic or medical information only. Some are also interested in learning about their donor's personality, interests, and whether they share common traits. Some wish to correspond. Some wish to meet.

It is likely to have been a big step for the donor-conceived person to lodge an application about you and they may be feeling apprehensive about your response. VARTA's experience has been that donor-conceived people are respectful of their donor's wishes and sensitive to you and your family's privacy.

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Entitlements

By making an application to the Central Register under the *Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 2008, (Vic)* **donor-conceived people are entitled to know your name, date of birth, donor code and contact details.** This will be released four months after VARTA has notified you, or earlier with your consent.

However, you have choices and control over whether you want to share new information about yourself, and/or have contact.

As a donor, you are also entitled to non-identifying information about your donor-conceived offspring. You may wish to know how many offspring have been born and their gender, month and year of birth.

You are also entitled to apply to the Central Register for identifying information about your donor-conceived offspring (name, date of birth, and contact details). However, this information will only be released to you with the consent of the donor-conceived person.

VARTA has experienced many positive connections made between donors and their offspring who have found it beneficial for them and their family.

The VARTA website has a range of information and films of personal stories of connections. Visit www.varta.org.au to learn more.

The Central Register process

Everyone who applies to the Central Register for information will have an information and support session with a VARTA counsellor before proceeding.

A **Statement of reasons** may be completed following this session to help the other person decide how they want to proceed. The form explains why they have applied for information and what their hopes are for information exchange and/or contact.

You have options and choices

You may wish to consider:

- using a **VARTA counsellor** to discuss options and any concerns
- writing a letter including **non-identifying information** e.g. medical, cultural, hobbies, personality, which will be provided to the applicant by a VARTA counsellor
- **corresponding** via the VARTA letterbox/email service or by a non-identifying email address
- using a **VARTA counsellor** to begin contact and to perhaps meet
- lodging a **contact preference form** specifying your chosen method of contact or if you wish the applicant to have no contact with you or any of your children aged under 18 years. If you specify no contact, your contact details will **not** be provided to the applicant. A contact preference is legally binding for five years.

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VARTA is here to support you

VARTA manages the Donor Conception Register Services and can provide information about your rights. VARTA staff are available to help you consider the implications of an application. We can also help you talk to your partner and children about donating if you have not already done so.

In addition, VARTA staff can assist with your initial exchange of information or contact with your donor offspring if this is what you decide to do.

VARTA offers a free and confidential service. VARTA staff will remain neutral and respectful of people's choices and opinions at all times. Your partner and relatives are also able to contact VARTA for information and support.

For further information:

Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority

Phone: (03) 8601 5250

Email: dcrs@varta.org.au

Web: www.varta.org.au

Melbourne (Formerly) Anonymous Sperm Donors - MADMen

MADMen is a group of men who were sperm donors for IVF programs in the 1970s and 80s. The members share a range of experiences and views. A number have met some of their offspring, others have not.

- www.facebook.com/groups/1506518609565214
- Email: MADMEN@iinet.com.au