



Glossary of Terms

Egg Donor: A woman who provides one or more eggs for the purpose of assisting with in vitro fertilization (IVF) or scientific research. An egg donor can donate for altruistic purposes or for monetary compensation.

Gamete: A reproductive cell containing half of the genetic material necessary to form a complete human organism. During fertilization, male and female gametes (sperm and ovum, respectively) fuse, producing a [zygote](#).

Germ Cells: Cells comprising actual reproductive components of a human organism (e.g., eggs, sperm).

In Vitro: A process that takes place in the laboratory (e.g., in cell culture).

In Vitro Fertilization (IVF): Refers to any technique in which egg(s) and sperm are joined (or egg(s) are fertilized with sperm) outside of the human body, creating a human embryo in the laboratory.

Oocyte: An egg before maturation; a female gametocyte; also referred to as an ovum.

Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syndrome (OHSS): A condition that may result from the hormones administered for the purpose of superovulation and occurs in some magnitude (mild, moderate, severe) as a short-term complication. Milder forms occur 10 percent to 20 percent of the time (American Society of Reproductive Medicine, ASRM, 2005). Symptoms of OHSS include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal distention. More serious forms of OHSS result in fluid retention and accumulation of fluid in the abdomen and pleural cavity, which puts pressure and stress on major organs that can lead to strokes, organ failure and respiratory compromise. The ASRM (2003) states that more severe forms of OHSS, which result in hospitalization, are "by no means rare."

Somatic Cells: Cells from the body other than sperm or egg cells.

Sperm Donor: A man who provides sperm for the purposes of assisting in IVF or scientific research. A sperm donor can donate for altruistic purposes or for monetary compensation.

Superovulation: Process by which an egg donor's ovaries are stimulated to produce multiple eggs that can be used for IVF or research. It involves the administration of a series of powerful hormones to first suppress the ovarian function, and then to superovulate the woman to produce large numbers of eggs (12 to 20, or more) that are then surgically extracted.

Zygote: A cell formed by the union of two gametes.