

SELF-INSEMINATION GUIDE

1. Establish when you ovulate as accurately as possible using a basal thermometer or the mucous method for at least three months. Most women ovulate on the 12th-14th day after the first day of the last period but each woman is different. Detailed information about how to establish when you are fertile is available at the Women's Health Collective.

2. Choose a donor and let him know the dates you plan to inseminate. For fertilization to take place, insemination usually must occur some time between one day prior to ovulation and up to one day after ovulation. Sperm live one to three days in the female genital tract. The egg lives up to 24 hours. There are lots of factors involved in choosing a donor but in terms of fertility, men with the lowest overall fertility are heavy red meat eaters, take no vitamins, drink a lot or smoke more than a pack of cigarettes a day. Also, many prescription drugs can adversely affect sperm count and sometimes cause genetic damage without visibly altering the semen analysis. For best results, the donor should abstain from orgasm for two days before the insemination. As well, he should abstain from alcohol, cigarettes, hot tubs and hot baths for at least 72 hours prior to ejaculation.

3. Arrange for the donor to ejaculate into a container of suitable size to draw up the semen with a syringe. Sperm is sensitive to light, heat and air, so it should be kept in a clean, glass jar with a lid on, in a brown paper bag and stored or transported at room temperature.

4. Use a clean syringe (without a needle) to draw up the semen from the container, insert the syringe into the vagina like a tampon and press the plunger. Lie with your hips raised on some cushions for about 20 minutes. The usual quantity of semen ejaculated averages 3.5 millimeters so don't expect a large amount of fluid.

5. OPTIONAL. Properly insert your own fitted diaphragm that you've practiced putting in to keep the sperm close to the cervix and not dripping out.

6. Two inseminations per cycle are standard. You may do more than that but it takes a few days to build up a maximum sperm count. You should inseminate at 24-48 hour intervals for four to five days during ovulation.

REFERENCES:

Rocking the Cradle, Lesbian Mothers: A Challenge in Family Living, Gillian E. Hanscombe and Jackie Foster. Alyson Publications, 1981.

Textbook of Medical Physiology, Arthur C. Guyton. W.B. Saunders Co., 1981.

Women's Health Collective, 888 Burrard Street, Vancouver, BC, 682-1633.

GOOD LUCK!