

Questions to Ask if You are Considering Donating Your Embryos to Research (46)

With nearly 400,000 frozen embryos now in storage in the US, many couples are faced with the decision of what to do with the embryos they no longer need either because their family is complete or because of other social factors. One option is to donate the embryos to scientific research. The term “scientific research” may feel cold and uncomfortable to you and may even bring up fears about whether your embryos would be used for cloning. It is important to know that the government does not allow for reproductive cloning. Some labs are conducting private research to improve the culture of embryos and a few are working to develop stem cell lines which, at a future date, may be used to treat patients with serious life-threatening illness. Ask your clinic the following questions when you are talking to them about the option of donating your embryos to research.

- What type of research will be done on the embryos?
- Is the research privately funded?
- Where will the research be done?
- If the embryos were stored at the three-day stage will they be cultured to the blastocyst stage after thawing?
- Does the facility have approval by its Institutional Review Board to do research on donated, frozen embryos?
- Will stem cells be created from the embryos?
- Will all the embryos be used for research, or will some be thawed and not used?
- After the research is complete what will happen to the embryos?
- Will there be financial compensation to the donating couple?
- Review all contracts carefully and sign and date them in pen. Keep a copy for your records.

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