

What's Inside

- The Eamie Golding Building Families Foundation Fund Raiser
- Upcoming Health Fairs and Shows
- Service Awards
- Blastocyst Culture in In Vitro Fertilization
- IVF and TESA/ICSI Success Rates
- Egg Donor Program and Successes



In Vitro Fertilization -- Blastocyst Culture --

Improving the Pregnancy Rate and Decreasing the Risk of Multiple Pregnancy!

An exciting option is now available for patients who make embryos in excess of those decided to transfer. Recent research, as well as our clinical experience, has shown that by culturing IVF embryos for an additional two to three days before transferring to the uterus, pregnancy rates per embryo transferred may be increased. Because of this improvement, **fewer** (generally two) embryos can be transferred resulting in **lower rates** of multiple pregnancies (greater than twins), yet maintaining or **improving** the clinical pregnancy rate per transfer. Current rates for 1999 for patients undergoing blastocyst transfer are **50%** per embryo transfer.

Traditionally, when undergoing in vitro fertilization (IVF) procedures, embryos have been transferred into the uterus after three days in culture at the 4-8 cell developmental stage.

The additional days of culture allow the embryos with the highest chance of producing a pregnancy to be identified for transfer into the uterus, improving the pregnancy rates of IVF and decreasing the risk of multiple pregnancy!

Patients who do not produce embryos in excess of the number to be transferred, due to increased maternal age, low egg production or recovery, low sperm recovery and/or decreased fertilization or

development rates, will proceed with embryo transfer on the second or third day after ultrasound retrieval.

The ART Program's proven success with this new technique allows us to offer this to all IVF patients who have more embryos produced than they should transfer to achieve a healthy pregnancy.

Blastocyst Success Results

January 1999 – June 1999 *

Patients < 35 years of age

• Transfers	38
• Clinical Pregnancies	22
• Implantations	34
• Embryos Transferred	83
• Pregnancy per Transfer	59%
• Implantation Percentage	41%
• Avg. # Embryos Transferred	2.2%

Patients 35 - > 39 years of age

• Transfers	15
• Clinical Pregnancies	7
• Implantations	13
• Embryos Transferred	44
• Pregnancy per Transfer	55%
• Implantation Percentage	26%
• Avg. # Embryos Transferred	3.1%

New Huntsville Videoconsultation Program

Beginning the week of July 12, 1999, the ART Program began a videoconsultation program to meet the needs of our patients in the Huntsville and Northern Alabama area. This program will minimize the necessity for travel between Birmingham and Huntsville.

Each doctor will have a number of 15-minute and 30-minute videoconsultation visits available every week to provide the care usually given during a return office visit. If you desire to schedule a videoconsultation instead of a return visit to the Birmingham location, your primary physician will provide your counseling regarding your care in that 15 or 30-minute period. Nancy, our nurse practitioner in Huntsville, will provide any "hands-on" services such as physical exams, culture, ultrasounds, etc., as before.

Currently, our survey of patients who have experienced videoconsultation thus far, shows they are extremely pleased and excited with this option. They have expressed it as being very personal, convenient and cost-effective.

Health Fairs and Seminars

Southern Women's Show

The ART Program will again be present at the Southern Women's Show this year. The Show will be at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex **September 30 - October 3, 1999.** Show hours will be **Thursday, Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. and Sunday, Noon to 6 p.m.** We look forward to seeing you at **Booth 230.**

Brookwood Medical Ctr Health Fair

We will also have a booth at the Brookwood Medical Center Health Fair being held Friday and Saturday, October 15-16, 1999 at Brookwood Village Mall. Hours will be 12:00 - 8:00 p.m. each day of the health fair. **Please try to visit us.**

If you are interested in more information regarding upcoming events, please call Monica Hawk at 205-870-9784 or 1-800-476-9784.

Service Awards

Several of our employees have recently achieved or will achieve their 10-year mark with the ART Program.

Donna Free began employment on January 1, 1989. Donna has worked as an Embryologist/Andrologist in the lab. Donna received her Master's Degree in Biology at UAB.

Linda Jones became a part of the nursing staff on July 17, 1989. Linda received her nursing diploma from Burge School of Nursing in Springfield, MO. She is also certified in Reproductive Endocrine/Infertility nursing, and became registered by the American Registry of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers in January 1998. Linda is currently the coordinator for our Egg Donor/Recipient Program.

Penny Monella came to us on September 1, 1989 after seven years in the hotel business. Penny is the Financial Manager, overseeing insurance claims, financial counseling and scheduling. Penny has currently been successful in

implementing our new practice management computer system.

Thank you to Donna, Linda and Penny for jobs well done. We appreciate your wonderful years of service.

Earnie Golding Building Families Foundation

The second annual fundraiser event held for the Earnie Golding Building Families Foundation on Sunday, March 21, 1999 at Arman's was a huge success! Similar to last year, the format was a gourmet dinner at Arman's Restaurant in Birmingham and a silent auction and live auction. This year's highlight was a raffle for a Hawaiian vacation.

Tom Miller was our auctioneer for the evening, and we thank him for the wonderful job he did. The Planning Committee consisted of Elizabeth Cornay, Dianne Drummond, Tina Lacey, Lenora Pate, Monica Hawk and Dr. Kathryn Honea. Donated goods and services from many local merchants and artists were presented in the live and silent auctions. Attendees bid on items such as a vacation in Beaver Creek, vacations in Florida, jewelry, paintings, portraits, photography, gourmet dinners and many more marvelous items.

The Earnie Golding Building Families Foundation is an Alabama non-profit Foundation dedicated to helping infertile couples in Alabama. The initial Foundation planning began many years ago by Dr. Kathryn Honea and her late husband, Earnie Golding. The Foundation is named and was incorporated in July 1997 in honor of Earnie.

All of the money raised will stay in Alabama. It will be used for education of the public regarding the medical, emotional and financial aspects of infertility; providing financial assistance to couples seeking infertility treatment through any SART-approved program in Alabama; and supporting couples with high-risk multiple births or poor outcomes through financial and

emotional resources. We hope to begin distribution of funds by the end of 1999.

For those who attended and made donations, the Foundation and the infertile couples of Alabama appreciate it. For those who were not able to make it, look for our third annual fundraiser next Spring.

For additional information regarding the Foundation or next year's fundraiser event, please call Monica Hawk at 205-870-9784 or 1-800-476-9784.

IVF Successes

July 1997 - June 1999 *
In Vitro Fertilization

All Patients, All Protocols

• Cycles Started	417
• Cancelled Cycles	41
• Retrievals	376
• Transfers	366
• Clinical Pregnancies	144
• Rate/cycle start	35%
• Rate/retrieval	38%
• Rate/transfer	39%

- ❖ Excludes women 40 years of age and over and Clomid cycles.
- ❖ Excludes egg recipient cycles.
- ❖ Excludes cryobanking and TESA cycles.

TESA (Testicular Epididymal Sperm Aspiration) Successes

January 1997 - June 1999 *

All Patients, All Protocols

• Cycles Started	29
• Cancelled Cycles	5
• Retrievals	24
• Transfers	24
• Clinical Pregnancies	6
• Rate/cycle start	21%
• Rate/retrieval	25%
• Rate/transfer	25%

- ❖ Excludes Clomid cycles.
- ❖ Excludes cryobanking.

Egg Donor Program

The ART Program of Alabama is proud to offer an Egg Donation Program. This program is designed to allow a woman with healthy eggs to donate some of her eggs to an infertile couple who might otherwise be unable to have a family.

The first egg donor pregnancy occurred in 1984. Since then, over 5,000 babies have been born in the U.S. as a result of donor eggs. Experience and studies have shown that offspring of donor eggs are generally healthy children with no greater risk of birth defect than all children in the general population.

Who Can Be an Egg Donor?

The criteria for egg donation are understandably strict. In order to donate, a woman must be between the ages of 19 and 32. She must have two normal ovaries and regular menstrual cycles. She must not smoke or use other drugs. The donor must be comfortable with injections, as the ovulation medications are by injection. The donor must agree to physical and psychological screening provided at no cost to her.

There are two types of egg donors, anonymous and known or related.

- Anonymous egg donors wish to keep their identity confidential. The anonymous egg donor is comfortable with the understanding that her donation is totally anonymous. She will not know the outcome of her donation nor will she meet or learn the names of the recipient of her eggs.
- Known donors are women known by or related to the recipient. This type of egg donation involves free exchange of information between the donor and the recipient couple. A psychological consultation is required due to the emotional issues that may arise when donor and recipient are acquainted.

Who Would Want Donated Eggs?

The recipients of donated eggs are married couples with little or no chance of having their own child. The most common reason a couple seeks an egg donor is because the woman's ovaries have stopped producing eggs too soon. She may have had her ovaries removed as a result of disease like endometriosis, cancer, benign tumors or pain. The recipient woman may carry a genetic trait that she does not want to risk passing on to a child.

Male factor infertility does not rule out the use of an egg donor. Testicular Epididymal Sperm Aspiration (TESA) and Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI), two of the newest treatments for male infertility may be used in combination with a donated egg. TESA involves taking sperm from the epididymis or testicle of the man and injecting the sperm (ICSI) into the egg of the woman. This procedure is done in the laboratory. Even when donated sperm is required, an egg donor may be useful.

In the past, couples with severe egg or sperm dysfunction had only two options: adoption or remaining childless. Today, egg donation, TESA and ICSI provide a third option: an opportunity for the couple to experience pregnancy and childbirth together.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: "I've had my tubes tied. Can I still be an egg donor?"

A: Yes. As long as you have two normal, healthy ovaries, you can be an egg donor. Your tubes are not necessary.

Q: "How can I expect to feel when I take the medicines?"

A: The medicines you will take to induce egg production are injections. Most women tolerate these "shots" very well, but some women experience headaches, mood swings, bloating or cramping or stinging at the injection site. Symptoms are usually mild. Egg donors are closely monitored to avoid serious problems.

Q: "Does it hurt when the eggs are taken?"

A: The egg retrieval is done in the office. The donor is sedated using IV (in the vein) medicines. There is no incision or stitches. The majority of all IVF patients, including egg donors, report minimal, if any, discomfort during the procedure.

Q: "Will I use up all my eggs if I donate them now?"

A: No, you will not use up all your eggs. Women are born with far more eggs than they can ever use in their lifetime.

Q: "Will donating eggs reduce the chance of me getting pregnant later in my life?"

A: There is no scientific evidence that donating eggs can decrease your chances of pregnancy.

Q: "Will I get paid for my egg?"

A: You are not paid for your eggs, but you are reimbursed for the time you invest in the process. If you complete the screening and are accepted as a donor you can expect to receive \$2,500.00 at the end of each completed donation cycle.

Q: "How much time does being an egg donor take?"

A: Usually up to 5 visits are needed to complete the screening process. After you are accepted as a donor and matched with a recipient, approximately 8-10 visits over an 8-week period are needed to complete one full donation cycle.

For more information about the Egg Donor Program, please contact Linda Jones at 205- 870-9784 or 1-800-476-9784.

Egg Donor Program Results

January 1997 – June 1999 *

All Patients, All Protocols

• Cycles Started	34
• Cancelled Cycles	5
• Retrievals	29
• Transfers	28
• Clinical Pregnancies	17
• Rate/cycle start	50%
• Rate/retrieval	59%
• Rate/transfer	61%

Support Groups

ALABAMA

MOST (Mothers of Supertwins). MOST is for couples experiencing multiple births. There is a quarterly newsletter available, as well as "new mother" packets mailed to expectant or just delivered mothers. For more information, please contact Heather Sasser, regional coordinator for Northern Alabama at 205-350-2399 or Lynn Dias, regional coordinator for Southern Alabama at 334-343-2086. Or, visit their web site at www.mostonline.org.

BIRMINGHAM

RESOLVE® of Alabama, an infertility discussion group meets on the second Tuesday of each month at Dawson Memorial Church in Homewood (upstairs in the building behind the sanctuary). Call 205-969-8803 for reservations and information.

Mothers of Twins meets at Baptist Montclair Medical Center in the Nursing Auditorium on the first Tuesday of each month from 7:00-9:00p.m. Contact Edna Rush at 205-871-5558 for more information

Marvelous Multiples is a series of prenatal educational classes held each quarter at Brookwood Medical Center. Call Catherine Edmonds at 205-328-2958 for additional information and registration.

Stepping Stones is a support group designed for women struggling with infertility. The meetings are held at Briarwood Church, Room M-202A on the last Monday of each month. Meetings are 7:00-8:30 p.m. For more information, call Cathy Barrington at 205-595-6012.

WISH (Women of Infertility Sharing Hope)—Discussion group with a spiritual focus meets the third Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at the Warrior Methodist Church. Call Kelly Winnett at 205-647-6911 or Ginger Chappell at 205-647-4026 for details.

Love Forever and Always is a support group for those experiencing miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death. Call 888-893-LOVE for more information.

HUNTSVILLE

RESOLVE® discussion group meets monthly. Call Tanya Black at 256-883-3231 for details.

Marvelous Multiples is a series of prenatal educational classes held at Huntsville Hospital Women's Center. Contact Kelly Johnson at 256-517-6601 for more information.

MONTGOMERY

RESOLVE® meets monthly. Call Mollie Isaacson at 334-288-9883 for additional information.

TUSCALOOSA

The Tuscaloosa Infertility Group is headed by Margaret and Sherman Howard. For information, please contact the Howards at P.O. Box 117, Northport, Alabama 35476.

To add additional support groups or more information to this list, please contact Monica Hawk at the ART Program, 205-870-9784 or 1-800-476-9784. You may also e-mail us at ART_Program@msn.com.