



N o v a I n V i t r o F e r t i l i z a t i o n

## **Gestational Surrogacy Agencies**

There are many gestational surrogacy agencies, several of them in the Bay Area. Each of them has a pool of pre-screened surrogates from which you can make your selection. The surrogacy applicants are typically young women in their twenties and thirties with low risk for disease transmission and substance abuse. Most of them have made the decision to become a surrogate based on a combination of the financial incentive and an altruistic need to help infertile couples.

Once you have selected your surrogate, she will be instructed by the agency to contact us directly to set up her initial consultation at Nova IVF. We work with many surrogacy agencies. You could find an agency on your own or you can choose one of the following agencies we are most familiar with:

**Abundant Beginnings Company**

Nicole Lawson and Julie Allgood  
2801 Ocean Park Blvd #233  
Santa Monica, CA 90405

323-577-BABY

[www.abcsurrogacy.com](http://www.abcsurrogacy.com)

**Circle Surrogacy**

345 Lorton Avenue  
Burlingame, CA 94010

617-439-9900

[www.circlesurrogacy.com](http://www.circlesurrogacy.com)

**Northwest Surrogacy Center**

1801 Bush St Unit 220  
San Francisco, CA 94109

415-426-7849

[www.nwsurrogacycenter.com](http://www.nwsurrogacycenter.com)

**Surrogate First**

5670 Wilshire Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90036

424-5673703

[www.Surrogatefirst.com](http://www.Surrogatefirst.com)

**The Surrogacy Source**

24012 Calle De La Plata, Suite 370  
Laguna Hills, CA 92653

877-375-8888

[www.TheSurrogacySource.com](http://www.TheSurrogacySource.com)

**The Egg Donor Program/The Surrogacy Program**

4184 Colfax Avenue  
Studio City, CA 91604

818-506-9300

[www.EggDonation.com](http://www.EggDonation.com)

**Additional Resource:**

**Your Surrogacy Journey**

P.O. Box 30129  
Walnut Creek, CA 94598

925-300-6958

[www.yoursurrogacyjourney.com](http://www.yoursurrogacyjourney.com)

## Gestational Surrogacy: Guidelines

### Deciding about Gestational Surrogacy

Please consider the following questions before finalizing your decision to proceed with the surrogacy treatment:

- Why is Gestational Surrogacy a better option for you and your partner than egg donation or child-free living? Do you understand the difference between gestational and traditional surrogacy?
- Have you discussed using a surrogate with your family? Why or why not? What were their reactions?
- Who will you tell about your child's background and when?
- Have you determined if you will tell your child about his/her background? If so, when? If so, how will you tell your child? Perhaps share pictures and family history about your surrogate?
- Have you considered how you might feel if, after all the interaction and sharing with a surrogate, she does not get pregnant?
- Have you and your partner discussed theoretically the number of embryos to be transferred? Are you aware that a greater number of embryos transferred results in higher rates of multiple pregnancy?
- Do you know what selective termination or selective reduction means? How do you feel about it? Do you know the risks of miscarriage from multiple pregnancies versus the risks of miscarriage from selective termination?
- Have you considered how you would feel if the child is born with a birth defect?
- Is there an egg quality and/or a male factor as well?

### How to Choose a Gestational Surrogacy Agency

You may look for a surrogate on your own or you may use the services of a third party gestational surrogacy agency. Here are some common guidelines and questions:

- What is the fee schedule for the provider's services? Do you have to pay a fee up front? Is the fee refundable if you change your mind about a surrogate? What exactly do all the fees cover? Does the agency charge differently if you pay cash, check or credit card?
- What is the fee for the surrogate herself? Can she set her reimbursement herself? If she was a surrogate before has her price remained the same or gone up? If the intended parents pay the surrogate's expenses, does the agency provide an itemized list of expenses?
- What kind of screening does the surrogate need to have? What is the psychological screening and who performs it, the agency or a third party? Is there an extra charge for psychological testing (i.e., MMPI)? Can you see the results of the testing? Can you have the surrogate tested by a third party of your own choosing?
- Does the agency facilitate a meeting between you and the surrogate?
- What kinds of records and information are kept on surrogates, where and for how long? There may be some reason in the future to contact your surrogate.
- What is the legal contract the agency requires the surrogate to sign?
- How long has the agency been in business under the current name or a different name? How many surrogates has the agency matched with the intended parents in a year?
- Does the gestational surrogacy agency help the uninsured surrogate find medical coverage?

## Finding a Surrogate on Your Own

A surrogate can be a relative, friend, or you may want to find a surrogate on your own, rather than using a gestational surrogacy agency.

A blood-related surrogate can be an excellent choice as long as the potential surrogate is not pressured into the treatment. Also consider what would happen to the family relationships if the treatment was unsuccessful. The feeling of guilt and "letting you down" by the surrogate may be profound.

Once you select a potential surrogate, have her email or call us to set up her initial consultation.

Your surrogate does not have to live locally or even in this country. It is possible to minimize the number of your surrogate's visits to Nova IVF. She would have to come for a 1 to 2 day visit prior to the beginning of the gestational surrogacy cycle and would have to stay for a day during the treatment itself.

We have listed some of the factors you should consider in your search for a qualified gestational surrogate:

### Positive Indicators:

- Younger than 40 years of age
- History of at least one full-term pregnancy
- History of regular menstrual periods
- No history of infertility or multiple miscarriages

### Negative Indicators:

- Positive family history for inheritable psychiatric disorder
- Substance abuse
- Two or more first degree relatives with substance dependence
- Current use of psychotropic medications
- Family history of sexual or physical abuse without professional treatment for the surrogate
- Chaotic lifestyle
- Significant current stress
- Marital relationship instability
- History of legal difficulties
- High risk sexual practices
- Under the age of 21
- Desperate financial situation
- Objection to gestational surrogacy by the partner of a potential surrogate should disqualify such surrogate.

Please consider the following questions in making your surrogate selection. The choice of the questions will depend on whether the potential surrogate is a relative or friend, or merely a known surrogate.

General Questions:

- Why do you want to participate in gestational surrogacy?
- What are your feelings about being available in the future for the baby?
- What are your expectations about how a child born from this treatment should be raised?
- Does it matter if the intended parents are married?
- Does it matter if I (as the intended parent) am single, a gay or a lesbian?
- What do you imagine how you will feel if the procedure does not succeed?
- Do you expect any legal relationship with the baby?
- What are your expectations, if any, around receiving a fee for your participation?
- Are you willing to participate a second time if we desire siblings for our child, or if a pregnancy didn't result from the first transfer?
- Do you have any children of your own? How many do you have and what are their ages?
- Are you willing to participate in a counseling session?
- Are you aware that you will need to sign a legal agreement detailing your willingness to sacrifice all parental claim or responsibility?
- Do you have health insurance in the event of pregnancy complications?
- If you have a husband/partner, how does he feel about your interest in gestational surrogacy?
- What is your understanding of the medical procedure needed to prepare your uterus to receive the embryo(s)?
- Who will be your support person during the treatment? Who will give you your injections?
- Are you aware that there may be a multiple pregnancy? How do you feel about this possibility?
- Are there people with whom you have shared your interest to be a surrogate? If there were any, what were their reactions?
- Why do you think you would be a good surrogate?
- What do you believe your strengths and weaknesses are?
- Do you have any ethical or religious viewpoints which might affect your decision to be an surrogate?
- Do you know anyone who has been a surrogate? What was her experience?
- Where did you learn about this opportunity?
- What are your feelings about selective termination or selective reduction?
- Are you willing to have an amniocentesis or chorionic villi sampling if recommended by your obstetrician?

Specific Questions When the Surrogate Is a Relative or a Close Friend:

It is presumed that any surrogate who is a relative or a close friend will have an ongoing or close relationship with the intended parents. Consequently, the questions do not need to be as expansive as with a recruited surrogate.

- Is there anything significant about your relationship with your relative that contributed to your decision to be a surrogate?
- What do you imagine are the concerns associated with being a surrogate to a relative?
- How do you imagine your relationship will change by being a surrogate?
- How does your family feel about your decision to be a surrogate to a relative?
- Who will know about this decision and who will not?
- If you have decided to keep this private, how do you expect to handle an unplanned disclosure?
- If you have a husband or partner, how does he feel about the possibility of a baby born of this procedure? Will he participate in counseling if requested?
- Have you discussed with your partner the risks associated with this procedure and with the medication you must take?

Specific Questions for an Unrelated Gestational Surrogate:

- Have you or any member of your immediate family ever smoked, drank or used illegal substances? To what extent are any of these, or have any of these ever been, a problem?
- Have you ever been pregnant? What was the outcome?
- Have you ever been a surrogate before? If you have, was there a resulting pregnancy, multiple pregnancy, and live birth(s)?
- Do you have any children? If yes, how old are they now? Were there and are there any significant health issues we should know about? What was their birth weight and length?
- If you do not have children, why do you want to help us have a baby? Have you considered the unlikely circumstance where at a later date you might be unable to conceive?
- Why do you want to be a surrogate? What do you think you will get out of it? If you have already been a surrogate, what did you get out of it?
- If you get pregnant, will you tell your family members including your children that this is a gestational surrogacy pregnancy? If so, how will you tell them, and when?
- Have you thought about how you would feel if, after all this interaction and sharing, you do not get pregnant?
- Have you thought about whether you would like any ongoing contact such as pictures, phone calls or meeting the child?
- Is your job or school situation flexible enough to do this procedure? Do you have child care available, if you have children?

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