

## **GESTATIONAL CARRIER, SURROGACY AND EMBRYO DONATION**

While traditional adoption of an infant or older child may be the best option for some families, others find the risks and uncertainties of the adoption process too overwhelming. These families may want to consider using a surrogate or gestational carrier to help complete their family.

Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) provides new and exciting opportunities for family building. Once considered to be a process that was only available to the very wealthy, gestational carrier and surrogacy have become readily available throughout the United States.

Although still likely to cost quite a bit more than the average adoption, costs for In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) have been steadily declining in recent years, making this a more affordable option for many families.

To determine if any of these arrangements might be right for you, it helps to understand the differences between the ARTs process that might be available.

Traditional Surrogacy is also called “Preplanned Adoption” in Florida. This arrangement involves the artificial insemination of a woman who agrees to create a pregnancy in this manner using her own eggs. The sperm used for the traditional surrogacy can come from the intended father or from a third party donor.

This type of procedure is less expensive than the gestational carrier arrangement, but carries with it some of the risks of traditional adoption because the surrogate has parental rights that must be terminated for the intended mother to be able to adopt the child.

Gestational Carrier arrangements, also sometimes called Gestational Surrogacy is an arrangement using IVF to implant an embryo belonging to the intended parents into the gestational carrier (or gestational surrogate) who receives compensation for her services as a carrier for the intended parents. If the embryo was created using genetic material from the intended parents, no adoption is necessary and a simple legal procedure to affirm the parental status of the intended parents allows the birth certificate to be corrected without requiring the intended parents to even go to court.

If a donated embryo or adopted embryo is used, then an adoption proceeding will be necessary, but typically a much simpler and straight forward process than traditional adoption.

## **EMBRYO ADOPTION**

There are hundreds of thousands of cryo-preserved embryos in the United States today. Most of the embryos belong to couples or individuals who have discontinued IVF procedures for their own family creation, but are not willing to authorize the destruction of the embryos.

Many of these embryos may be available for “adoption” by couples who can not use their own embryos with a gestational carrier. Intended parents interested in adopting an embryo will need to complete an adoption Home Study including criminal and child abuse clearances. Once approved the intended parents will have the opportunity to consider medical and genetic information regarding different “embryo matches” that might be appropriate for them.

### **SURROGATES/GESTATIONAL CARRIERS**

If you are interested in becoming a surrogate or a gestational carrier, you should contact our office for additional detailed information on how the process works.

Ordinarily, intended parents look for surrogates or gestational carriers between the ages of 24-34, who have had at least one successful pregnancy with little or no complications. They will expect the surrogate or gestational carrier to refrain from use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs and risky behavior during the process, and to cooperate in receiving regular pre-natal care.