

Voluntary Register - Explanatory Material

Regulation 22A, *Assisted Reproductive Treatment Regulations 2019* (Vic)

OFFICIAL

Why you are receiving this information

You are receiving this information because you have applied, or are considering applying, to be added to the Donor Conception Voluntary Register in Victoria.

Before any information can be disclosed as part of a match between you and another person on the Voluntary Register, the Donor Conception Registrar is required to provide you with this information sheet. This helps make sure you understand your rights and what happens next. This requirement comes from section 72(2)(a) of the Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 2008.

This guide helps you:

- understand your rights and choices
- know what happens if your information is shared
- learn about available support and counselling services.

About the Voluntary Register

The Voluntary Register allows donor conceived people, donors, parents, and relatives to share information voluntarily.

The Registrar will only disclose information about you with your permission.

Information that may be disclosed includes:

- your personal details, such as your name and date of birth
- health or genetic information
- your contact details (if you choose to provide them)
- other information you wish to share, such as letters, photos, or a message

How matches are found

Matches are identified when two or more people who have joined the Voluntary Register share a connection to the same donor code or codes. You will be notified each time a new match occurs.

The match notification will explain the connection to you such as a donor, donor conceived person, a genetic sibling, or a donor sibling's parent or relative.

You will be asked to complete a consent form to confirm whether you want to take part in the match. If you choose not to continue, your match will be told the process is not moving forward. If you do not respond, they will be told that no response was received. You can restart the process at any time and do not need to reapply to the Voluntary Register.

Important information about accuracy of connections

The information held by the Donor Conception Registers is based on details provided by fertility clinics. While every effort is made to confirm and verify these records, the accuracy of an identified connection depends on the information originally supplied to the Department.

DNA testing is the only way to confirm a biological relationship with certainty. If you want to be sure of a genetic connection, you may wish to consider DNA testing through a trusted provider. Currently the Department does not provide DNA testing as part of the matching process.

Statement of Reasons

When both you and your match have confirmed your wish to participate, you will be invited to complete a Statement of Reasons form. This form helps you explain to your match:

- why you joined the Voluntary Register
- what information you may be open to sharing or receiving
- what type of contact, relationship, or connection you may be comfortable with now and in the future

You will receive a separate Statement of Reasons form for each match, so your response is current and tailored to the specific person you have matched with.

Information to Share

If you choose to continue after reading your match's Statement of Reasons, you will be invited to complete an Information to Share form.

This form lets you select what information you would like the Donor Conception Registrar to disclose on your behalf. This may include:

- a personal message
- background information
- health or genetic information
- photos or letters
- your contact details (optional)

Disclosure

The Donor Conception Registrar will share your completed forms and any attachments you have chosen to provide.

Each person chooses what, if anything, they want to share. Some people may decide to only receive information and not provide any of their own.

After information has been disclosed from both people, the Department does not facilitate any further exchange of information between matches.

Deciding to share your information

At every stage of the Voluntary Register process, you choose what personal information you want to share. What you decide to include is entirely up to you, and you can update your choices each time a new match occurs.

It is important to think carefully about what feels right for you. Once information is shared, the other person may use it to contact you. They might:

- send a message or letter
- share their own background or family information
- ask questions or suggest further contact

You can decide:

- whether to include your contact details
- how much information you feel comfortable sharing
- what kind of contact, if any, you are open to
- how slowly or quickly you want things to progress
- whether to use a dedicated contact method, such as a new email address set up for this purpose

Experts and people with lived experience recommend taking things slowly and allowing any new connection to develop over time, at a pace that feels right for you.

Support and counselling

Receiving or sharing donor conception information can bring up many thoughts and feelings. Information and counselling are provided by an independent service delivered by The Royal Women's Hospital, which has experience supporting people involved in donor conception.

A counsellor can help you:

- think about what information you want to share
- prepare for what contact might look like
- set realistic expectations about how contact may happen and how often
- maintain boundaries that feel comfortable for you

If you would like to access the counselling service, please contact us at DCR@health.vic.gov.au to organise a referral.

Medical and genetic information

Some people want to know about their medical or genetic history. You are not required to share this information; however you may choose to share it if you think it might help someone understand their health.

You can choose to:

- include medical or genetic information as part of the Voluntary Register information sharing process or
- share it directly with the person if contact is made outside of the matching process

Information for parents

If you are a parent of a donor conceived child, it can be helpful to begin conversations about their donor story early and in an open, age-appropriate way. Experts and people with lived experience emphasise that early and honest discussion can support understanding, trust, and a strong sense of identity.

Families and donor conceived adults have shared that discovering this information later in life can be challenging and may bring up complex emotions. Every family's experience is different, and support is available through The Royal Women's Hospital Counselling Service to help you plan and navigate these conversations.

Counselling can also help you think through whether you want contact between your child and their donor siblings, and what this might look like now or in the future.

If contact is made

Making contact with someone on the Voluntary Register can be a significant step. Everyone's experience is different, and there is no right or wrong way to approach it.

You may wish to:

- speak with a counsellor before, during, or after contact
- connect with peer networks or support groups
- take time to think about your next steps before replying or meeting
- set clear boundaries and explain what feels comfortable for you
- reflect on what ongoing communication might look like

You can take things at your own pace. Contact may involve messages, sharing photos, or meeting in person, and you can change your mind at any time about what feels right for you.

It can also be helpful to consider how contact may evolve over time, as people's needs and circumstances can change across different life stages.

If you have concerns about privacy, safety, or wellbeing, support is available. The Donor Conception Register team can also arrange for you to speak with a qualified counsellor.

Additional support services

If you ever feel you are in danger or need urgent help, call 000 immediately.

If you need someone to talk to or are feeling distressed, the following services are available:

- Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636
24/7 support for mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800
24/7 support for children and young people aged 5 to 25.
- Head to Health – 1800 595 212
Provides mental health information, advice and referral to local services (Monday–Friday, 8.30 am–5.00 pm).
- Lifeline – 13 11 14
24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention.

- MensLine Australia – 1300 78 99 78
Support for men with family, relationship or mental health concerns.
- PANDA (Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia) – 1300 726 306
Support for parents and families during pregnancy and early parenthood.

Community and peer support

- ARTFam (Assisted Reproductive Treatment Families Australia)
Email: Hello@ARTFam.org.au
Supports donor conceived people, donors, recipient parents and anyone involved in assisted reproductive treatment.
- ASMBBC (Australian Solo Mothers by Choice)
Email: Hello@ASMBBC.au
Provides community, peer support and connection for solo mothers and people considering solo parenthood through donor conception.

Feedback

You can contact the Donor Conception Registrar at DCR@health.vic.gov.au for help or to provide feedback.
Your input helps improve services for the donor conception community.

Glossary

Donor conceived person

Someone conceived using donated sperm, eggs or embryos.

Donor

Someone who donated sperm, eggs or embryos.

Parent

Parent includes all people legally recognised or acknowledged as having a parental relationship or responsibility for a child, whether biological, adoptive, or through partnership or court order

Donor sibling/sibling

People conceived using gametes from the same donor(s).

Donor code

A code created by an IVF clinic that links people who share the same donor. Donor codes are used to identify matches on the Voluntary Register.

Donor Conception Registrar

The official responsible for managing the Voluntary Register and sharing information with consent.

Counselling

Professional support to help you think through your choices, prepare for contact and understand your feelings.

Voluntary Register

A register where donors, donor conceived people, parents and relatives can choose to share information or connect.

THIS SPACE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

To receive this document in another format, email the Donor Conception Registrar [<DCR@health.vic.gov.au>](mailto:DCR@health.vic.gov.au).

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

© State of Victoria, Australia, Department of Health, February 2026