



# St. Eugene's General Hospital

## Family Planning Unit

General Information as of April, 2013.



We are pleased that you are thinking of planning your new baby with St Eugene's. There are many important decisions to be made at this stage which may affect the life of your family and even generations to come. Therefore it is important to read this preliminary information carefully.

It is strongly recommended that you and your partner undergo genetic screening to particularly determine whether either of you are carrying faulty genes. When you conceive you also have the choice as to whether the embryo is screened, or not. Screening is carried out so that we can determine a number of factors:-

1. Whether the embryo carries any faulty genes which will lead to defects at birth or a tendency towards contracting specific diseases later in life.
2. The appearance of the child when she or he reaches maturity (Eye, hair and skin colour, height etc)
3. Tendencies towards intelligence, character traits (such as anger), and sexuality.

Your choices then are as follows:-

- You may choose **not** to undergo screening yourself nor to have your embryo genetically screened, (nor even to choose its sex), but you should be aware that in recent years there has been a marked increase in litigation taken out against parents by children who found that they had one or more faulty genes which gave rise to actually contracting an associated disease, to difficulties finding employment with employers who had mandatory genetic screening for their workforce, and difficulties in obtaining a variety of insurances (especially associated with life and health) because of insurance companies with similar practices. It should be added that some children have also taken out litigation against parents who approved genetic alteration to genes affecting appearance, but generally this litigation has not been very successful.
- You may decide just to have faulty "disease oriented" genes replaced with normal ones. St. Eugene's can deal with most of these, though there are still a few patents held for some of those genes by major drug companies in association with health insurance services. Your private health insurance may cover these procedures. The procedures will effectively eradicate the faulty genes from future generations on the child's side of the family.
- In addition you may decide to alter the appearance of your child. Because of its cosmetic nature, these so called "Designer Baby" procedures, can only be provided here in association with private hospitals who have special agreements with health insurance and drug companies holding the relevant patents. Such procedures can be quite costly but are often justified in terms of better employment opportunities, and better acceptance when the child grows up. Because more people are opting for these choices children who look "plain" in appearance could be at a disadvantage socially.
- Choices concerning intelligence, character traits and sexuality are complicated by environmental factors and questions of autonomy (your child's free choice and self-determination) which could also lead to litigation (as mentioned above). Assessment has to be made by our trained counsellors, and you should make an appointment with them as soon as possible if you wish to avail yourself of these options.

Genetic procedures are rather more straightforward if you are going on an I.V.F. program and the fertilised eggs that you choose may still be refined further before they are implanted.

Lists of genetic procedures and maps of the human genome are available on request. Your personal screenings will remain confidential and are made available to you in consultation with your doctor.