

YOU ASKED, WE ANSWERED: Can Children of Anonymous Egg Donors Find Siblings?

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Wendy Kramer Answers Questions About Her 'Donor Sibling Registry'

You submitted your questions to Wendy Kramer, who has done what the egg and sperm donor industry has yet to do: She has created a voluntary online database called the Donor Sibling Registry that has connected thousands of children with their donors.

It's a way to share valuable information, and for some, to reconnect with a missing piece of their identity.

Peter from Bedford Hills, N.Y., asked: "Why isn't the solution to have the donor provide his total medical history without his identity?"

Wendy Kramer answered: The donor does provide his known medical history as well as limited non-identifying information at the time he donates. Since donors are mostly young college students, you can assume they are basically healthy at that time.

What we don't know are their (and their immediate families') medical information after the day they filled out the information. We don't know if the donor developed diabetes or cancer, or if his dad had an early heart attack. There are many genetic and hereditary conditions that would be essential for the donor-conceived person to be aware of.

Also, we have found that some donors are not sure of their parents' or grandparents' medical histories, so donor profiles sometimes contain inaccurate medical information.

Some donors have had trouble getting the sperm banks to update their information — phone calls are not returned. Also, the sperm banks do not know how many children are born from any given donor, so there would be no way for them to contact all interested parties if a medical condition was reported.

Sharing medical information between half siblings as well as donors is an essential reason for people wanting to connect on the Donor Sibling Registry.

James from Dover, N.J., asked: "I'd like to find more info on this. I have a 4-year-old daughter and I think I should be able to find her biological mom."

Wendy Kramer answered: We have made the site very easy to access and use. You can browse the clinics, postings, educational materials and all information before deciding to post your own information. People post their information under the clinic, doctor or facility that they used, and with their donor number (if they know it).

If you sign up with the same donor number as someone already posted, you will show up as a "match" and can then contact them via the anonymous DSR messaging system. When you are comfortable, you exchange e-mail addresses and go from there.

Many people want to connect to exchange photos or medical information, while many desire to establish contact for familial relationships. Some people connect before their child is even born, others are adult donor conceived, who are thrilled to find half siblings they never knew existed.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/story?id=4569495#.UFddAo2PW9w>

It's very different for everyone. People who have limited information on their donors (maybe not a donor number) can still post as well. We have had matches made with limited information — they just confirm with a DNA test.