

Can you imagine...?

## What Donor Conceived People say to their parents and to us:

There's one thing I want for my 21st birthday and that is to find my donor. I don't expect a relationship. All I want is to sit across a table from him and have a cup of coffee. Is one cup of coffee and knowing your name too much to ask?

*After my mom told me, she said, "All it changes is that we don't know your medical history. Nothing else." I can't tell you how wrong she was.*

The words, 'I'm not your real father' will haunt me for the rest of my life. At age 18, my life was turned upside down.

*My legal father lost his testicles to cancer so he and my biological mother sought out a sperm donor after they were turned down for adoption (both had criminal histories). I guess clinics don't screen sperm buyers like the adoption agencies do.*

Growing up, I had the feeling of being something unnatural. I had the feeling I was a lab experiment.

*If you think I should be praising these reproductive technologies for giving me life, you're not in your right mind.*

It's none of your business to tell me how I should feel about never knowing my paternity, never knowing my 500 other siblings, and my aunts, uncles and grandparents.

*I am a human being, yet I was conceived with a technique that had its origins in animal husbandry. Worst of all, farmers kept better records of their cattle's genealogy than assisted reproductive clinics had kept for the donor conceived people.*

All quotes from [www.anonymousus.org](http://www.anonymousus.org)

### The Problem:

Too many people have been harmed by choices they or their loved ones have made, based on incomplete or biased information.

Too few of them get the chance to tell their story.

### How do we help?

By telling the whole truth about what happened to us.

### What you can do right now:

Sign up for the Ruth Institute newsletter and receive the free download, "You Were Loved into Existence." Sign up at [RuthNewsletter.org](http://RuthNewsletter.org).

The Ruth Institute is a global non-profit organization focused on keeping the family together, protecting the rights of children and helping the millions of people who have been harmed by family breakdown.

### The Ruth Institute believes:

Every person has the right to know his or her cultural heritage and genetic identity.

Every child has a right to a relationship with his or her natural mother and father unless an unavoidable tragedy prevents it.

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Children and Donor Conception and Assisted Reproduction



Information brought to you by  
the Ruth Institute



# Elevated Physical and Medical Risks Relevant to the Donor Conception and Assisted Reproduction Experience



A word from  
**Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse,**  
Founder and President  
of the Ruth Institute

I believe God wills the existence of each and every person who has ever lived. Each of us was loved into existence by God. No matter what the circumstances of a person's conception and birth may be, we must never ever regret the child!

- If you are a Donor Conceived Person, you are loved by God and your life is precious to Him.
- If you participated in Donor Conception, and your family now faces unexpected challenges, be assured: your child is loved by God.

The information in this brochure will help you see that you are not alone.

The chart displays the known physical risks associated with IVF and ICSI, regardless of whether the couple uses their own sperm and egg, or donor gametes.

The quotations from Donor Conceived Persons illustrate the range of emotions they experience, regardless of the procedure used in their conception.

Not every child experiences every one of these medical and psychological issues. I list them so that you can be aware of the full range of possible consequences.

Donor Conception and Assisted Reproduction are new developments in human history. Everyone is making decisions with incomplete information. I encourage all of us to be gentle with ourselves as we learn more together. I invite you to enter the dialogue with us at the Ruth Institute and our allied organizations. And I implore you to keep the lines of communication open with your loved ones.

Your friend, Dr. Morse

## ELEVATED RISKS EXPERIENCED BY INFANTS CONCEIVED THROUGH IVF OR ICSI

Stillbirth	Caesarean section
Pre-term birth	Low birth weight
Cerebral palsy	Rare genetic imprinting disorders, including Beckwith-Wiedemann Syndrome and Angelman Syndrome
Major multiple birth defects	Urogenital defects
Musculoskeletal defects	Asthma
More frequent admission to the hospital	Longer hospital stays

## ELEVATED RISKS OBSERVED IN CHILDREN AND ADULTS CONCEIVED THROUGH IVF OR ICSI

FOR ALL CHILDREN	FOR GIRLS ONLY
Elevated or unusual distribution of body fat	Discrepancy between bone-age and chronological age
Unusual glucose levels	Elevated levels of the hormones, LH and DHSEA
Elevated blood pressure	Binge drinking in adult women
ADHD	Clinical depression in adult women

## ELEVATED RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (Low birth weight and pre-term birth are risks of IVF)

Premature death in the first year	Neurosensory impairment
Lower IQ	Subnormal height
Lower educational attainment	Multiple chronic conditions

References available at [www.ruthinstitute.org/References](http://www.ruthinstitute.org/References)

**What is Donor Conception?** The “intended parents” use the sperm, eggs or womb of a donor who will not raise the child. The term “donor” is misleading, as many “donors” receive payment. In many places, laws create anonymity, blocking the child’s legal right to know his or her donor.

**What is Assisted Reproduction?** A child is conceived through some method other than the sexual intercourse of his or her own mother and father, including Inter-Uterine Insemination (IUI), In Vitro Fertilization (IVF), Intracytoplasmic

Sperm Injection (ICSI), or other techniques. These techniques may be performed with donor sperm, or the sperm of the woman’s husband.

**What is Surrogacy?** A “Gestational” Surrogate carries a child made from another woman’s egg. The egg is fertilized through IVF and the embryo is transferred into the surrogate’s womb. A “Traditional” Surrogate carries a child made from her own egg and gives the baby to the “intended parents” in exchange for money.