

# PATHWAY 2 FAMILY

There is  
**Hope**

Get the facts,  
know your options  
.....

**Eating** for  
**Fertility**  
.....

**One Family's  
Embryo Donation**  
.....

Leads to life and family  
.....

WINTER 2015

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 **nightlight**<sup>®</sup>



# PATHWAY2 FAMILY

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## Have you heard?

Embryo donation and adoption have allowed more than 6,000 babies to be taken home in the arms of their loving parents. It may be the solution you have been searching for and are about to discover in this issue of Pathway2Family.



**Additional Copies  
Available at  
Pathway2Family.org**

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# Eating for Fertility

There is a lot of misinformation about reproductive health and how different foods or behaviors can affect your fertility. There are ideas about 'superfoods' to combat infertility that run anywhere from drinking grapefruit juice daily to eating yams leads to twins. That being said, some foods are better for your overall health than others, and a balanced, nutritious diet can only improve your chances of conceiving. Here are a few foods to help you get started:

**Dairy** Not only are they good for your bone density, research shows that full-fat dairy products can also benefit ovulation.

**Lean meat** Harvard studies have demonstrated the benefits of animal proteins and how they can contribute to healthy body weight while also positively impacting fertility. Think lean turkey, chicken, and if you need a protein boost without meat, try quinoa or beans.

**Fatty fish and shellfish** Anything that supplies you with B12 can help with embryo implantation, but be sure that you avoid any fish with high mercury concentrations, like swordfish or shark.

**Nuts and seeds** Low in refined sugar but high in phytosterols, nuts and seeds (including the pumpkin seeds in this recipe) can not only boost your serotonin levels, but also help with your cardiovascular health.



## Quinoa stuffed acorn squash

serves 4-8

### WHAT YOU NEED

2-4 small acorn squashes, halved and seeds removed (2 people per squash)

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided, plus more for brushing on the squash

fine sea salt and fresh ground pepper

1 cup dry quinoa, rinsed

2 cups filtered water

1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley

1/2 cup feta, crumbled

1/2 cup raw almonds with skins, coarsely chopped

2 teaspoons red-wine vinegar

### WHAT TO DO

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Cut your squash in half and scoop out all the seeds and membranes.

Next, brush each squash half with a bit of olive oil, and season with some salt and pepper.

Roast the squash cut-side down on a baking sheet until tender when pierced with a fork, and caramelized, about 15-25 minutes.

While the squash is cooking, bring the 1 cup well rinsed quinoa and 2 cups water to a boil in a small sauce pan. Once the quinoa comes to a boil, give it a stir, cover it and reduce the heat to simmer. Cook the quinoa until all the water is absorbed and you can see the little skins split, about 10-15 minutes.

Chop the parsley and toast the almonds, then chop coarsely. You can also replace the almonds with pumpkin seeds for an extra kick.

Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chopped almonds or pumpkin seeds to the skillet and stir frequently until golden brown in spots, about 2-3 minutes. Transfer the nuts to a paper towel lined plate to get the grease off. Sprinkle the almonds with some fine sea salt. Set them aside.

In a large bowl, combine the cooked quinoa, parsley, feta, almonds, red-wine vinegar and 2 tablespoons olive oil. Season with salt and pepper, and then spoon into your squash halves! You can also add cranberries for some extra sweetness.



A pregnant woman is lying down, wearing a green ribbed long-sleeved shirt. Her hands are resting on her belly. The background is a softly blurred indoor setting with light coming from a window.

# There is Hope

Facing Infertility

Get the facts. Know your options.







**Even just a decade ago, couples were often reluctant to openly discuss their infertility issues.**

Today though, more and more couples are talking about their experiences with infertility, letting others know that they aren't alone and that there is hope for their situation. Online and offline support resources are plentiful, and it seems that everyone knows someone who is dealing with the issue—but it doesn't make it any less devastating when you receive your own infertility diagnosis.

Infertility isn't an uncommon healthcare issue; one in eight couples will experience infertility problems in their lives, and approximately 11% of women in the United States will be affected. Fortunately, there are many options available for couples to achieve the dream of building a family. Many couples will choose one of these alternative family building options:

**In Vitro Fertilization.** IVF is the process of fertilizing an egg with sperm outside of the body, then placing the resulting embryo into the woman's womb. This may be done with the couple's own egg and sperm, or with donations from

third parties. IVF can be expensive as the procedure may need to be repeated multiple times in order to achieve pregnancy.

**Surrogacy.** If you are unable to carry a baby yourself, having someone else carry your embryo to term could be a viable option. Surrogacy can be extremely expensive—you'll be paying for the surrogate as well as IVF treatments—so it may be cost prohibitive for many couples.

**Domestic or International Adoption.** Some couples decide that instead of having a biological child, they want to open their home to a child who needs one. Domestic adoption is usually more affordable than international adoption, and there are many agencies out there that can help you with the adoption process.

**Embryo Adoption.** This process allows a woman to experience pregnancy with her adopted child, which can benefit both parents and baby. Embryos are donated by couples who are done building their families through IVF and who want their remaining embryos to have a chance at life. Aside from foster adoption, this is one of the most affordable family building options.







Which option you choose is a deeply personal decision, based on your medical history, lifestyle, financial means, and personal beliefs. Discuss with your doctor which options may be best for you, and take time to talk to other families who have been through a similar situation. They may be able to give you insight that can help you decide which choice is right for you. Remember that all of these options are helping move you toward your goal of creating a family with your partner and loving and raising a baby of your own.

**11%**  
of **women**  
in the



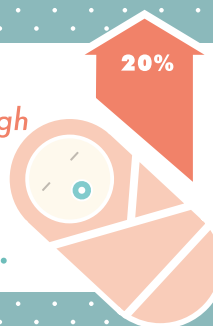
**UNITED STATES**  
will be affected by  
**infertility**

# Choosing a Family for Embryo Adoption

Providing each option and every hope.

## By the Numbers

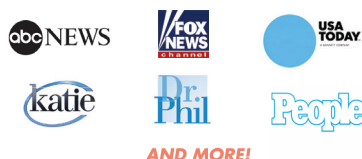
The number of babies born through embryo adoption is increasing by **20% ANNUALLY.**



**20%** OF CLIENT DONATION & ADOPTION REFERRALS  
COME FROM U.S. MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS.



## Embryo Adoption in the HEADLINES



AND MORE!



INTEREST IN EMBRYO ADOPTION, AS INDICATED THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS, HAS MORE THAN TRIPLED since 2010.

**X2**  
since 2014

THERE HAVE BEEN

**1,100**  
DONATIONS

REPRESENTING OVER

**5,300** DONATED EMBRYOS

TO THE SNOWFLAKES EMBRYO ADOPTION PROGRAM  
DONORS MAY CHOOSE THE RECIPIENT FAMILY

TOTAL NUMBER OF BABIES BORN THROUGH EMBRYO DONATION & ADOPTION:

OVER **6,000**  
SINCE THE MID 90'S

WATCH A NEW VIDEO ABOUT EMBRYO DONATION AT NIGHTLIGHT.ORG

IN 2014 THE NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS SEEKING DONATED EMBRYOS DOUBLED!





# "Everybody is where they are supposed to be."

— one family's embryo donation story

Gina Yasuda and her husband built their family using the in vitro fertilization process, and in 2002 they decided their family was complete.

That left them with the decision of what to do with their three remaining embryos, which at the time were frozen at their fertility clinic. Facing this choice is not a unique one as more couples opt for IVF as an alternative family building plan. When a couple determines they are done growing their family,

those who have remaining embryos must decide what they want to do with them: dispose of them, donate them to science, or allow them to be adopted by another family who wants to have a child.

Gina Yasuda felt that for her family, the adoption option was best. Donation to science or disposing of the embryos wasn't a consideration. She wanted them to have a chance at the life they were created to have – even if it was with another family. While some of her friends and family didn't understand her decision, she knew it was the right one, and her fertility clinic told

her about the Snowflakes Embryo Adoption Program.

Yasuda got in touch with Snowflakes and they worked with her to search for the right family for her remaining embryos. Yasuda was thoughtful as she searched for a couple she felt would be the perfect match for her embryos. Stephanie and Ben Hawkins were that perfect match. While Yasuda had hoped to find a family who lived closer to her home, when she read the Hawkins' profile, Yasuda said, "Everything about them felt right."



Snowflakes coordinated the adoption, and the Hawkins' received all three of Yasuda's remaining embryos, one of which resulted in the pregnancy and birth of their daughter Annika in 2009. After Annika was born, the Hawkins reached out to Yasuda through their adoption agency and let her know that they would like to remain in direct contact. Yasuda says that was a blessing to her, to be able to see Annika grow up with her family. The families regularly send each other pictures and emails, and when Annika was two years old they got together to meet in person.

"It was good, most importantly, it felt right," Yasuda said about the meeting in a CBS News interview.

*"Everybody is where they are supposed to be. Annika is where she is supposed to be. Those are her parents."*

Today there are over 600,000 frozen embryos in storage in the United States, and many couples face the decision about what to do with their remaining embryos. More couples are learning about the option to donate for reproduction and are choosing to give their embryos a chance at

life. The fact that there are programs allowing them to select the recipient makes donation even more attractive. The Snowflakes program invites participation by both embryo donors and embryo adopters without discrimination.



## *Embryo Adoption is an Affordable Adoption Choice*

Learn more about this unique, low-cost and accessible adoption program today

- » No costly egg donor expenses
- » Embryos are available now
- » Experience pregnancy and childbirth

[www.EmbryoAdoption.org](http://www.EmbryoAdoption.org) • 970.663.6799  
[Amy@nightlight.org](mailto:Amy@nightlight.org)

EMBRYO ADOPTION



Awareness Center







# Coping <sup>2</sup> WITH the EMOTIONAL TOLL of Infertility

Nearly one in eight couples will struggle with infertility in the United States this year, and while most of these infertility cases will be attributed to physical causes, no one is ever really prepared for the emotional impact that facing infertility will have on their life.

Beyond learning about one's own infertility, once you mix in the countless physical exams, hormone medications, and financial drain, you have concocted the perfect recipe for emotional devastation. Many couples report feeling confused, angry, sad, fearful, hopeless – the same feelings someone might experience when they are going through a grieving process that follows a major traumatic event.

No one can understand the emotions a couple experiences during their struggle with infertility unless they've experienced the diagnosis for themselves, and that can leave couples feeling isolated. Many are bombarded with questions and advice from well-meaning friends and family, which can ultimately hurt more than it helps. The emotional stress can have a negative impact on a couple's fertility, their relationship, and even their professional life, so it's important to find healthy ways to cope with the emotions they are experiencing.

## Couples can begin to cope with the emotional strain by:

**Keeping the lines of communication open.** Couples may close themselves off from each other in an attempt to protect their partner from feeling the intensity of

their emotions, but that can have a negative effect by creating distance in the relationship. Talking to each other about how they are feeling – the good and the bad – can help couples understand that they really are in this together.

### Realizing there is no “normal” when it comes to infertility.

Everyone deals with this diagnosis in their own way. Couples shouldn't place expectations on themselves or their partners about how they “should” be feeling about infertility, and allow each other the freedom to cope in their own way.

**Avoiding blame.** Men and women both can be tempted to place blame either on themselves or their partners, thinking that they shouldn't have waited to have a child, blaming each other's lifestyle, or events from each other's past. Blame creates resentment and negativity in a relationship, and it isn't helpful for solving an infertility problem.

**Finding outside support.** While couples want to be there for each other, having a network can take some of the stress off of the relationship by getting support from people who are going through a similar situation. Finding an in-person support group or looking for an online group to join can be incredibly beneficial for emotional health.



# ONAL fertility

During all of the physical and emotional stress, couples should remember why they are going through this: because they want to build a family together. Many couples will eventually conceive a biological child either through natural means or via medically assisted methods such as in vitro fertilization. Other couples will need to seek out alternative family building methods such as adoption, embryo transfer, or surrogacy. While it is a difficult road to travel, anyone will tell you that the end result of raising and loving a baby is absolutely worth the struggle.



1 in 8  
couples  
struggle  
— with —  
infertility

## 10 things **NOT** to say to someone living with infertility

- 1 **Just keep trying.** No couple, no matter how dedicated, can endure fertility treatments indefinitely. If they decide to cease, they need your love and support.
- 2 **Whose fault is it? Is it him or you?** Medical details are private. Even if they are shared with you, keep them in confidence like a true friend.
- 3 **Just relax.** Unfortunately, a glass of red wine and some yoga doesn't help with fertility.
- 4 **Have you thought about losing weight/gaining weight?** Women dealing with infertility may already have complex emotions about how they view their body and adding to those perceptions does not help.
- 5 **Having kids is overrated.** For someone who wants to experience parenthood, having kids is a strong, visceral desire. In no way does that count as 'overrated' for them.
- 6 **You're so young! You have plenty of time to get pregnant!** Women (and men) of a range of ages can struggle with infertility. Haven't you seen 'Baby Momma' with Tina Fey?
- 7 **But you've already had one. Isn't that enough?** Couples that have secondary infertility can experience the pain of infertility even more acutely because they already know what a joy having a child can be.
- 8 **It'll happen. Maybe you just need to stop trying so hard!** Trying hard, whether it's naturally or with assistive treatments, is what gets results. And it might be emotionally and physically challenging, so they need your support.
- 9 **We weren't even trying and we got pregnant.** It's different for everyone. Don't rub it in.
- 10 **Maybe it's just not meant to be.** For someone who desires a family, this is one of the most hurtful things they can hear because of the implication that they are not meant to be parents or wouldn't be good parents. Instead, ask how you can help.



# Remaining Embryos?

## Storage solutions offer flexibility and peace of mind

On the quest to have children of their own, many infertile couples may experience tunnel vision. Their focus is upon achieving pregnancy and having the baby they have always dreamed of. The likelihood of having 'extra' embryos is not even on their radar screen!

However, the truth remains that many couples who use in vitro fertilization to create embryos will eventually face a decision about what they will do with embryos they are paying to keep in frozen storage. And the longer they

postpone that decision, unfortunately, the more likely it is for them to abandon their embryos. Cryo-storage fees for embryos average \$600 per year and are often even more expensive than couples are prepared for.

If you have embryos in frozen storage, embryos you don't plan to use, why not consider donating them to another family?

Sure, there are other options for your remaining embryos, but you created the embryos with the hope to bring them to life. Embryo donation for reproduction may be the right choice for you.

Nightlight and Fairfax Cryobank have partnered to help people with remaining embryos reduce their storage fees as they wait to choose and match with a family who will receive their embryos. When you decide to donate your embryos you become eligible to use this low-cost storage option. The cost is only \$350.00 and this includes both the cost for shipping your embryos to the cryobank as well as storing them for up to 12 months while you determine the right family for your embryos. Most matches are completed within six months after you apply to the program.

If you are not interested in donating your embryos at this time, Fairfax Cryobank has a separate program for embryo storage which costs \$400/yr plus shipping expenses.

Fairfax Cryobank and Nightlight adhere to all Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulatory requirements and provide secure storage and legal safeguards for your embryos.

**That's peace of mind.**

Learn more about directed donation, call Leah at 714.693.5437 or email [Leah@nightlight.org](mailto:Leah@nightlight.org)



## Wishing for a baby? Choose the best to help.

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**Dr. Kevin H. Maas, MD, PhD**  
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111 Main St., Suite 100, Boise, ID 83702





## DONATING YOUR EMBRYOS TO ANOTHER COUPLE

You have the ability to provide the ultimate gift: the gift of life. You may donate your frozen embryos to a couple who is trying to build their family. You have children born from these embryos, you created the embryos with the intent of giving each of them life. What is the difference between an anonymous embryo donation and a directed embryo donation? Knowing the differences may help you make the decision that is right for you!

### FERTILITY CLINIC EMBRYO DONATION

- Clinic personnel choose the recipient family
- Medical procedure focused
- Clinic often divides the donation among multiple recipients
- Limited, if any, information regarding the recipient(s)
- Outcome of any recipient FETs unknown
- Limited future records stored for future access

### ADOPTION AGENCY EMBRYO DONATION

- Donor family chooses the recipient family
- Child/family focused
- Donor may give all embryos to one recipient
- Recipient family profile is provided, communication encouraged
- FET and childbirth information is shared
- Permanent records stored for future access



Begin your journey to parenthood with world-class fertility care.

With superior success rates, the latest advances and compassionate doctors and staff, it is easy to see why patients choose HRC Fertility for their fertility treatment.

### Pasadena Office

333 S. Arroyo Parkway, 3rd Floor  
Pasadena, CA 91105  
**877.577.5070**  
[hrcpasadena.com](http://hrcpasadena.com)

### Rancho Cucamonga Office

8112 Milliken Ave., Suite 101  
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730  
**909.941.1120**  
[hrcranhocucamonga.com](http://hrcranhocucamonga.com)







## REPRODUCTIVE PLANNING:

# A New, Important Step in Preparing for Your Future

About half of all pregnancies in the United States are unplanned, but creating a reproductive plan can help reduce the number of unplanned pregnancies and empower both men and women to take control of their reproductive health. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is encouraging healthcare providers to talk to both their female and male patients about reproductive planning, and encourage them to take steps to put their plan into action.

Reproductive planning isn't something that can only be done with a healthcare professional, though. You can start making your own reproductive plan by answering some simple questions:

**Do you want to have children?** If you do, give consideration to how many children you would like to have in your family. If you are not planning to have children, what methods will you use to ensure you don't become pregnant?

**What conditions need to be met before you become pregnant?** Think about the goals you have for your life, and how children will fit into those plans. Do you want to focus on your career now? Or get healthier before

pregnancy? Consider your goals and how they will impact the decision to have children.

**Is it possible your plans could change in the future?**

If you don't want children now, could you want them in the future? Or could the number of children you want change? Be realistic and know that life can be unpredictable.

**How old do you want to be when you start (and stop) having children?**

Many couples are choosing to wait until they are older to begin their families, but be aware that a woman's fertility begins to greatly decrease after she turns 35. If you decide to wait, are you open to using alternative family building methods like in vitro fertilization, embryo adoption, or egg donation?

**If you choose to have children and discover you or your partner have fertility issues, what alternative family building options are you comfortable using?**

One in eight couples will experience infertility issues; thinking about this possibility now can make it easier to make decisions down the road.

Once you've started to think about the answers to these reproductive planning questions, make an

appointment with a health care professional. They will be able to talk to you about the methods that are right for your reproductive plan, whether or not you wish to have children. In the end, you'll have a plan that clearly lays out how many children you wish to have, when, and what methods you'll use to achieve those goals.

That plan may look something like, "I want to finish school before I become pregnant, so until then I'll use a doctor recommended contraceptive to avoid pregnancy," or "My partner and I are ready to have children now and we are both healthy, so we're going to stop using contraceptives and try to get pregnant." Each person's plan is going to be different, based on their goals and lifestyle.

Remember that your reproductive plan isn't set in stone. Take time every year to think about your plan and make adjustments as needed. This is a great way to take charge of your reproductive health, family planning, and reduce the number of unplanned pregnancies in the United States. For more information on reproductive planning, you can visit the CDC's website at [www.cdc.gov/preconception](http://www.cdc.gov/preconception).



# EMBRYO DONATION: How does it work?

## Directed Donation Through an Adoption Agency for Patients With Remaining Embryos



### 1. Agency Coordinates Embryo Donor Screening & Testing

- FDA risk assessment questionnaire physical evaluation
- FDA panel of infectious disease tests for reproductive donors



### 3. Clinic Provides Pertinent Donor Medical Records

- cryopreservation report
- freeze/thaw protocol
- infectious disease test results
- egg and/or sperm donor profile, if applicable
- egg donor consent, if applicable



### 5. Agency Provides Legal Contract

- allows ownership of the embryos to be transferred from the donors to the adopters
- signed copy provided to clinic performing frozen embryo transfer



### 2. Embryo Donor Applies to Agency Program

- application with medical health history
- family profile with autobiography and pictures
- medical records releases
- evaluation of embryo storage alternatives for donors



### 4. Agency Facilitates Matching Process

- based on donors' and adopters' criteria
- donors have as much or as little involvement as desired



### 6. Embryo Adopters Have Frozen Embryo Transfer

- agency coordinates and pays for embryo shipment, if required
- frozen embryo transfer occurs at the original IVF clinic or the adoptive client's clinic
- agency communicates transfer results to donors per their request





# Miracles Do Happen

**Giving birth to your adopted baby is possible.**

The Snowflakes® Embryo Adoption Program has been helping families with the miracle of childbirth for almost 20 years.

- » Couples, once in your shoes, now have remaining embryos to gift to another family.
- » Embryo adoption success continues to grow each year as more babies are born into loving families.
- » Families who have chosen to donate embryos through Snowflakes are looking to find a recipient family like you.

**Your bundle of joy is waiting for you. Call today.**



**970.663.6799**

**[info@embryoadoption.org](mailto:info@embryoadoption.org)**

**[www.Snowflakes.org](http://www.Snowflakes.org)**

**[www.EmbryoAdoption.org](http://www.EmbryoAdoption.org)**