

MITOCHONDRIAL REPLACEMENT

Are three-parent babies in our future?

<https://mitochondrialtransfer.wordpress.com/an-orwellian-future-2/third-parent-rights-and-responsibilities/>

Third Parent Rights and Responsibilities

The third parent who provides their healthy mitochondria for the embryo is essentially a donor. Offspring only inherit mitochondrial DNA from their mothers, so all donors would be women. Any offspring resulting from mitochondrial replacement would acquire their biological makeup from two women and one man.

Similar to a sperm or egg donor, the mitochondria donor would donate their germ cells to a bank. They would go through a process just like a gamete donor: first a screening process, then hormone administration, and finally a procedure to extract their gametic cells (Stein, 2012). At the end of the process, they would be paid a substantial amount of money in exchange for their donation. For details about the actual procedure in which the DNA of the donor and the parents are combined, refer to the [Mitochondrial Replacement](#) page.

Since sperm and egg donors will most likely serve as precedent for forming laws to outline third parent rights and responsibilities, reviewing the current legal condition of donors is crucial to making an educated vote. First off, in the United States, sperm donors generally have no rights or responsibilities to their sperm if they donate through a physician as an intermediary. Licensed clinics are required to conform to strict legal, ethical, and medical standards ("Sperm Donor Legalities," 2012). If mitochondrial replacement follows this model, the mitochondria donor will have absolutely no ties to the child that they helped to conceive. They would simply make their donation anonymously and never look back.

There are severe consequences to making donations without the facilitation of a physician. **One such case** resulted in a sperm donor becoming legally obligated to pay child support. Donating mitochondria without a physician's supervision would obviously be much more difficult because an expert needs to perform the

mitochondria replacement procedure. But other reasons might arise to warrant the donor's personal or financial involvement; for example if the child were to acquire a mitochondria-related illness by some chance. Who's responsibility would it be to pay the medical bills? Laws should be drafted to account for such cases.

To learn more about sperm donor legalities, click [here](#).

Although third parent rights and responsibilities would most likely follow the gamete donor model, the United States has a long way to go in terms of issuing laws for other types of Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART) besides artificial insemination. Only eight states cover all types of ART, while only 4 of those cover both married and non-married couples ("Sperm Donor Legalities," 2012). Since most ART's are not addressed by the law, couples using such techniques have very vague legal positions. When voting on mitochondrial replacement, keep in mind that if it passes there must also be push for developing laws to protect the rights of all three parents involved.

Now that you have a sense of the Orwellian concerns regarding mitochondrial replacement, move on to learn more about opinions on "hubris," or >>[Playing God](#).