

A photograph of two women smiling and holding a sleeping baby. The woman on the left has blonde hair and is wearing a light pink top. The woman on the right has dark hair and is wearing a grey sweater. The baby is wearing a white onesie and is sleeping peacefully. The background is a soft, textured surface, possibly a bed or a rug.

# Fertility Treatments for Lesbian Couples



Vitanova

FERTILITY CLINIC | COPENHAGEN

Part of CREATE Fertility™

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[www.vitanova.dk/en](http://www.vitanova.dk/en)



# Fertility treatments for lesbian couples



We know what an exciting time starting a family is for you and we want to make the process as simple as possible.

Many lesbian couples choose Vitanova because we offer IUI (artificial insemination) and are the leaders in Natural and Mild IVF with a focus on making fertility treatment safer and more patient friendly.

We offer a range of donor sperm treatments and our unique approach means that we will always use the fewest drugs possible, work with your body and focus on the quality rather than the quantity of eggs. We pride ourselves on our tailored treatment protocols and our excellent success rates.

This booklet is intended as a guide to the different treatments available as well as information on choosing donor sperm and other considerations when starting your family.

We look forward to welcoming you to Vitanova and helping you create your dream family.

**Geeta Nargund**  
Medical Director



## Planning your family

For female couples wishing to become parents, there are more options available than ever before.

The two most popular options for undergoing fertility treatment at a clinic are intra-uterine insemination (IUI) and in-vitro fertilisation (IVF). IUI involves monitoring the cycle until the eggs are fully mature before injecting donor sperm into the womb at the time of ovulation. In IVF, on the other hand, eggs are removed from the ovaries and fertilised outside the body before being placed in the womb.

### IUI or IVF?

IUI and IVF both come with their own set of benefits and disadvantages. IUI is often the first choice for same-sex couples, if they have no signs of infertility, because it is shorter, cheaper and much less invasive than full IVF treatment. On the downside, IUI is less likely to be successful than IVF, with a 14% success rate for women aged under 35, compared to a 29% success rate for IVF (\*according to HFEA data from 2014–2016).

See pages 6–10 for more information on the patient journey for each approach. Our patients' stories also describe the different routes people have chosen to take, from IUI to partner to partner egg donation.

### Which tests and consents are needed?

Infectious disease screenings must be undertaken, including HIV, Hepatitis B core antibodies, Hepatitis B surface antigens and Hepatitis C. If you are using your partner's eggs, then they will also have to undergo donor screening.

### What are the emotional implications?

Embarking on fertility treatment as a lesbian couple is an exciting time however undergoing treatment can be a rollercoaster experience. There is also the added complication in a same sex relationship that only one parent will have a genetic connection to the child (unless donor sperm is obtained from a relative of the other partner).



# IUI patient journey



## Scan and test

Before we do anything, we need to know your AMH or AFC level in order to assess your ovarian egg reserve and therefore your fertility. By using our European Pharmacy partner, you will be able to order the majority of medication you need directly to your door! The process is simple and easy reducing the time and hassle for you during your journey.



## Book your virtual consultation

Book your virtual consultation with one of our multilingual medical team either online or by calling us.



## Virtual consultation

Talk to one of our medical team to discuss treatment and ask questions. We can arrange this consultation by Video, phone, or in person, with one of our multilingual team. If you are planning treatment as a couple then you should both join this session. At this stage, we will advise you on how to maximise your chances or pregnancy including:

- Eating a healthy diet
- Avoiding caffeine
- Maintaining fitness
- Keeping a positive and relaxed state of mind



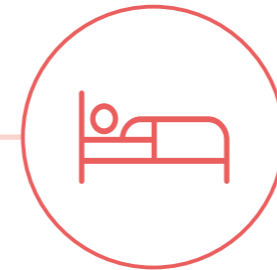
## Treatment plan

We will outline your personalised treatment plan, costs, and next steps. We have a trusted pharmacy partner that can deliver most treatment medication to you at home.



## Pregnancy test

14 days after IUI you can do an ordinary urine pregnancy test at home. If you are pregnant you should visit your doctor for a blood test to confirm the result. We ask that you update us by phone or email on whether your treatment has been successful. We're certified by the Danish authorities and obliged to report the results of our treatment.



## Post treatment

Afterwards, we recommend you remain lying down for half an hour or so. We understand this is an emotional time and there is plenty of space for your partner to relax with you. Once you leave the clinic, you're free to carry on as usual and return to your home country, with no restrictions on exercise or work. We recommend that you take a progesterone supply for two weeks after the insemination. This will either be vaginal tablets or vaginal crème. This medication can be bought at Vitanova or we can give you a prescription.



## Insemination

You attend our Copenhagen clinic. We create a quiet, relaxed atmosphere for the procedure to make sure you are in the best place. Insemination is similar to a gynaecological examination. Our specialist nurse or midwife will inspect the position of your womb, and then insert a thin catheter into the mouth of the uterus through the vagina. The nurse or midwife injects the sperm, which will find its way to your egg. The whole procedure takes just a few minutes.

# IUI opens up a new chapter for Keisha and Sabrina

## “Life with a baby has been amazing”

Five years ago we didn't think that having our own babies was even a possibility, we thought we'd have to adopt. Luckily for us, fertility treatment is a lot more accessible these days.

During our initial consultation with Vitanova, it became clear that IUI (artificial insemination) was the most suitable option for us, mainly because we were a good age for it and had no fertility issues. We also did a series of blood tests to make sure that all our bloodwork was right for pregnancy.

“Being able to start our own family has taken our relationship to the new level and has opened up a new chapter in our lives.”

When we went home and discussed it, we came to the conclusion that I (Sabrina) would try first as I am a little bit older than Keisha and at the time my body felt more ready for it. We both want to experience pregnancy, so we also decided that Keisha will have our second child.

It was quite a hard decision choosing a sperm donor with only a few basic characteristics to base it on, however we knew we found the right person when we read a testimony he wrote for any future parents and their donor conceived children. He came across as very similar to us and our values; it really felt like he matched us. That really helped us in making the decision to choose him as it almost felt like he was part of our circle of friends, someone we would hang out with.

Once the sperm was ordered, and had arrived in the clinic, we were ready to start the treatment cycle. As we were doing IUI there was no need for any medication however we did visit Vitanova for a day 7 scan to check my follicles were growing.



Life with a baby has been amazing. The first month after becoming new mums was really hard as we were finding our feet and didn't really know what to do. It does get easier though, and we are both completely in love with our beautiful little girl

“We are now planning to give our daughter a blood sibling using the same sperm donor.”

Being able to start our own family has taken our relationship to the new level and has opened up a new chapter in our lives. We are on a wonderful journey and if you're in a same sex relationship and considering starting a family, there are so many options that will allow you to do that. We are now planning to give our daughter a blood sibling using the same sperm donor.

I also started ovulation tracking at home, first thing each morning. Later that month, when I got a positive surge, it was the sign that my ovulation was imminent and we went back in to Vitanova for the IUI procedure. The procedure went really well and everyone made me feel really calm. Unfortunately the first IUI attempt was unsuccessful, however that didn't stop us and certainly didn't change the passion we had for starting our own family. So I went through the process again the following month and was overwhelmed to see our first positive pregnancy test.

Everyone at Vitanova was very warm and supportive every step of the way. They made our whole experience really lovely, especially during both procedures where I felt completely relaxed and calm.



# IVF Patient Journey





## Donor sperm fertility treatment helps female couple create their dream family

“We’ve had four girls in just over four years. It is lots of fun, it’s very, very busy but we wouldn’t change it for anything”

We started researching fertility clinics around 5 years ago as we had both always wanted children. At first we started treatment with another clinic and had our first daughter through them.

I gave birth to our first child and we had planned for my wife to have our second. Although she’s very healthy, when we started treatment, we discovered that she had some very complex issues which we didn’t expect.

We changed our treatment to Vitanova following a recommendation from a friend who had the same issues as my wife. Unfortunately, her IVF cycles were not successful. We returned to me having treatment and we had our second daughter at Vitanova. We then came back hoping for a third child, and after three attempts, I became pregnant with our twins.

“We changed our treatment to Vitanova following a recommendation from a friend”

All of our children were conceived using the same sperm donor. We used a donor from the European Sperm Bank as we wanted more information about the donor. We were able to obtain a wealth of information about sperm donors. We received extremely detailed information, not only on his physical appearance, creative skills, hobbies, education level, language skills, etc. but also on his family. We could also access an audio interview from the donor, a childhood photograph and a letter written by staff at the clinic who met the person. We wanted someone with a clean medical history and a high level of education, similar to our own, so we were able to choose the ideal donor based on the information we received.

We’ve had four girls in just over four years. It is lots of fun, it’s very, very busy but we wouldn’t change it for anything.

Going through IVF is an emotional journey and one of the hardest things we’ve ever had to go through. But for us, the end result has been worth it.



At Vitanova we felt supported though it was difficult as my wife’s problems couldn’t be solved. When we moved to Vitanova from the previous clinic we visited, things seemed different and I felt that we had better treatment. I had a lot more confidence in Vitanova, they felt a lot more professional and the doctors were fantastic.

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“Going through IVF is an emotional journey and one of the hardest things we’ve ever had to go through. But for us, the end result has been worth it”

Despite the incredible ups and downs we went through during our treatment, it still makes me smile, because that’s where our babies were conceived.

# Donor sperm treatment

Donor sperm treatment is a form of fertility treatment where sperm from a donor is used to fertilise a woman's own or donor eggs.

We have a selection of donors kept on-site, at our Copenhagen clinic, that we have purchased from a Danish sperm bank. Alternatively, if you wish to purchase your own donor sperm, we will happily provide any help you may need with that process. We support single women, lesbian couples and heterosexual couples seeking fertility treatment using a sperm donor.

## Open donors

In open donation, children conceived via sperm donation have the option to contact the sperm bank when they turn 18 for information on the identity of the donor. The child's parent cannot make the request.

## Anonymous donors

In Denmark you have the option to choose sperm donated by a man who prefers to remain anonymous, which means neither the parents nor the clinic has access to identifying information.

## Known donor

Known donation for single women can be arranged where the donor is the legal father of your baby, in which case your donor should accompany you to the clinic for your initial appointment to discuss the process. We can also carry out treatment for heterosexual and lesbian couples with a known donor, where the donor will have no legal or financial responsibility for the baby.

