

RAINBOW FLAG

10/9/10	http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DonorSiblingRegistry/message/13674
<p>Rainbow Flag is 100% open-donor, with agreements to be known to the child essentially from birth. Using them hugely limits your other choices - they only have a small handful of donors. But if an open-from-birth donor with no legal rights is an essential quality you're looking for, they have 'em.</p>	
2/10/08	http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DonorSiblingRegistry/message/9898
<p>I just wanted to note that the Rainbow Flag bank releases info, and insists you share your own as well, in a effort to create new families, which would include the donor. They are the only (as far as I know) bank that allows gay men to donate, and some do with the hope of attaining a father like role with the DI child. In this case, you may end up in the same boat as you are in now. Although I know that according to them you determine the amount of contact beyond the obligatory reporting of pregnancy and sharing of personal information. It's an interesting concept. We considered them, but their choices are very slim.</p>	
10/27/07	http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DonorSiblingRegistry/message/9144
<p>I thought of few ramifications- I just wanted a baby. But now that my daughter is here (she's 14 months) I find myself thinking a lot about half- siblings and her donor [much to the dismay of my partner]. Perhaps the recipients of donor sperm should be counseled much like egg donors. I don't know. All I know is this, I live in NYC, and I'm involved in the LGBT community and my cousin is involved in SMBC groups, and I cannot tell you how many women I've met [from both worlds] that have used donor sperm from CCB and Fairfax. I used to laugh when people would make comments like, "well what if they marry each other?" Now I'm beginning to wonder.</p> <p>I was under the impression that there were national guidelines restricting the use of one donor to 20 families [as far as I know, TCSB is the ONLY bank that limits it to 10 families]-- but who's really keeping track of these things? How many women out there are not reporting pregnancies, and how many banks aren't counting pregnancies that happen at home without the aid of an RE's office?</p> <p>[from moderator ML:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) ASRM guidelines limit one donor to 25 live births per population area of 850,000. It's not clear what this actually means in practice, or how it can be enforced, especially as it's estimated that only 40% of births are reported, and we know that some donors have donated at two or more sperm banks.2) The Rainbow Flag sperm bank limits a donor to children by 4-6 different women. Other countries typically have limits of 5-10 families.3) The "rationale" for the "secrecy" of most sperm banks about limits seems to be that they are aware that many people are uncomfortable with the fact that some donors seem to have hundreds of genetic children.]	
9/16/07	http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DonorSiblingRegistry/message/8938
<p>Furthermore, I haven't seen this listed on the registry yet but many are already aware. There is a sperm bank in Berkeley that has been around for years called Rainbow Flag. They have a completely different way of looking at anonymity of donors. They don't allow it. Within the first year of life, the parents are given the donor information and encouraged to meet. This bank is especially attractive to homosexual donors and recipients who have also been creative about baby making for some time. That being said, not all of the donors are gay.</p>	
7/27/07	http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DonorSiblingRegistry/message/8627
<p>There is only one clinic (Rainbow Flag) that allows the parents to know who the donor was when the child is 3 months old, but I think that's also the only clinic where you could choose a gay donor who presumably wouldn't see you as an unfit parent due to your sexual orientation.</p>	
1/20/07	http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DSR_Discussion/message/2838

Rainbow Flag Health Services, <http://www.gayspermbank.com> [which despite its website address recruits heterosexual as well as gay & bi-sexual donors]

* tells the mother who the donor is when the child is 3 months old.

* limits their donors to having children by only 4-6 different women.

1/17/07 | http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DSR_Discussion/message/2817

As far as I know Rainbow Flag are the only bank that knowingly accept gay donors. It's no big secret though, and the FDA are fully aware. From RF's homepage: "We are the only sperm bank in North America to actively recruit Gay and Bisexual sperm donors."

Being gay or bisexual does not equate to a history of risk factors though, just as being heterosexual doesn't mean you can't have an STD. There are gay men who have never had unsafe sex in their lives, just as there are heterosexual men who continually have unprotected sex with new partners. I would expect that RF would reject any donor that has unprotected sex with multiple partners regardless of their sexuality. It's not worth their time and effort proceeding with a donor if there's a chance that he might fail the final medical tests. RF have to stay within the rules, and there are some US states they cannot ship to as a result.

Leland Tremain wrote an article about it here:

http://www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary_0286-15668266_ITM

More about their selection criteria here:

http://www.fda.gov/ohrms/dockets/ac/01/briefing/3817b2_11.pdf

At the end of the day, RF recipients are often seeking a gay donor, so it should be their informed choice.

Anonymous samples are frozen and quarantined for six months pending further testing of the donor anyway, so the FDA guidelines seem to me to be political rather than medical.

1/10/07 | <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DonorSiblingRegistry/message/8260>

Yes, it's amazing the rules the owner places on the recipients. However, as I recall, he admitted to me once that he has no actual power to enforce the rules, especially on circumcision. Once we are pregnant, the horse is out of the barn. He just hopes to educate and make an effort on an issue about which he cares deeply. As much as I think circumcision is the decision of the mother in a donor situation, I'm okay with his policy, even if he comes off a little crazy. This is solely the decision of a birth mother, if you ask me.

Another policy he has is that you must introduce the infant at the three month mark...but you can do what you want after you do. He makes that clear, he doesn't force a commitment. His hope is that open gay families will result. I'm 100% behind gay donors. I just wish someone besides him ran his gay sperm bank. He is way too invasive in the decisions and outcomes of the women who his services.

My opinion.

Rainbow was my first experience trying to get pregnant. I ended up leaving Rainbow after several really horrific experiences. I didn't get along with the guy from the first, but I really wanted a gay dad for any children. He said things that really turned me off, but I bit my tongue again and again. Since then, I've met at least a dozen women who had the same bad experiences. More on them in a minute. For me, for my first kid, I ended up meeting a gay guy friend who was totally into helping me father my first child, and I couldn't be happier.

My point was that having a gay sperm bank is a great idea---just not by this icky freaky guy who runs it. Also, this takes nothing away from any and all of the wonderful children who've resulted in this bank. Our kids are precious and wonderful no matter where the dna comes from. I'm just thrilled to be able to become pregnant. So about Rainbow... The guy who runs it... I just found him to be a know-it-all control freak who's into Star Trek and sci-fi. That's a start. He wants to do much of the choosing for you. He sees himself as a big scientist. He dissuades you from using certain sperm because he has strong opinions about whether it's a good match for you or not--his opinion. He will lie and say a donor is not available if he thinks it's not the donor for you. He did that to me, and then a friend who was also using him got the same sperm the next week. I was angry. And most importantly, his donor's sperm is low count, low motility, and simply does not get you pregnant. I used at least four different samples from him, and they were all bad--I didn't realize that till I took them to an actual fertility doctor who analyzed the sperm in the lab before doing an IUI. He makes bragging rights to the contrary, about his sperm is great, and the children are mostly girls. But I find that impossible, as did my doctor. I never got a penny back, either. Lots of wasted money.

My doctor at Pacific Fertility and also at Laurel Fertility poo poo'd all his claims and told me many clinics in

the Bay Area refuse to use his sperm. Dr. Carolyn Givens in SF, for one, will not use his sperm because of their bad experiences with his products. He plays fast and loose with the FDA regulations, she told me, and I'm not talking about the ban on gay donors. It's more than that. One mom at a meeting told me that she had two miscarriages with sperm that later turned out to have resulted in a baby with genetic defects, and after all this, she told me he still had that donor's sperm for sale.

One time, he sold sperm to me from a donor that he'd mixed samples with, which isn't allowed. He does things with the sperm which may be fine to him, but aren't according to the regs, so said my doctor.

Also, this is the worst thing I personally experienced: His hands shake terribly, and if you've ever had an IUI done by a nebbie nurse with shaky hands, then you do not know the definition of awful. It was the worst. I bled and cramped badly after one IUI. After another, I had to go on antibiotics.

A gay sperm bank by its definition has to be "underground" because of the FDA laws banning gay donors. If a lesbian were to open an underground gay sperm bank and if she ran it well, she'd make a fortune in the community. If anybody besides this guy opened and ran it, it would have to be better. It's this guy that's the problem. I am told by my doctors that the FDA has been trying to close him down for many reasons, not just the gay thing, and he operates well out of the rule of law. Which is sad, because I really really believe in gay donors, and I do respect him for trying to get gay sperm out there. Gay men are the perfect donors, as I find their parenting desires mesh perfectly with our needs, especially if we are lesbians. These are gross generalities, of course! But worth considering. I think about how great a gay Dad is. You don't have a guy who expected to raise a kid, usually, so he's more open to deferring to you, and he usually loves the novelty of it. For my straight girl friends, I always impress upon them the ideal nature of a gay donor vs a straight one. Gay guys tend not to want to be overly involved in the hard work, because society never led them that way--but rather, they rejoice in the pride of having procreated. They tend to be the ideal weekend Uncle Daddy's. For single women in particular who do not want the donor men to be involved in any way, I have to chuckle, because why on earth wouldn't you want a free babysitter so you can have breaks? And my daughter knowing her Papa--even if the definition of father is quite different in her situation--is priceless. I could be dead wrong, but my gut tells me there is much less risk of custody issues with gay guys. There is nothing safer than a donor bank dad, sure, but the risks of custody nightmares aren't that large, compared to the enormous benefits of knowing your father.

Again, this is my opinion.

I'm happy to be pregnant with a second child by a donor bank, a known at 18 donor, because it was my only option. My original donor developed a blood problem that prevented him from fathering the second one. I just hope I will navigate it well, because I know I'm in for problems, if my other friends and their growing children are indications. Lots of issues for a kid with a donor dad, especially the unknown donor variety.

I just have to say, don't discount gay men. And I hope someone comes along other than Rainbow to continue offering the sperm of these great gay men.

1/9/07

<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DonorSiblingRegistry/message/8254>

My turn -- I'd like to respond! I've known Leland Traiman for nearly 30 years. My family and his family get together once or twice a year. We last met a couple months ago at the birthday party of an 8 year old of a mutual friend.

Leland readily admits his bank fits a "niche" --- namely, recipients who wish to allow their children contact with the donor before the children reach age 18. Leland started his bank when few banks allowed any disclosure information at any age; few banks provided any information except a very, very brief narrative, and basic height/weight/haircolor information.

One wonders how having the child know the donor from an early age works out in real life. My kids and I attend Summer camp each year at a camp for lesbian and gay parents and their kids. Usually at each camp one or more "donors" will be there with the recipients and their kids. Last Summer one guy was there with two lesbian households who had used Leland's bank. At least two of the families had had multiple children with this donor. He seemed like a very nice, but quiet man. He told me that three lesbian households had chosen him, and he was known to all. The kids and everyone seemed to get along fine!

I don't think that Leland is doing this for the money! He limits his donors to a maximum of four families, instead of the sometimes unlimited numbers allowed by some other banks. His partner is a Stanford Medical school graduate, a top-rated medical school. Leland is a very active, personable, passionate and compassionate person. I think his ethics are top-notch. I obviously can't vouch for the motility/morbidity of his bank's samples, but I did see his first office and equipment when he first started in Oakland, and it seemed top-notch.

Having a known-from-birth donor may not be for everyone, but for others it might be an ideal situation. Anyway, I have great respect for Leland, and wanted others to know that he's a great guy!

1/9/07 <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DonorSiblingRegistry/message/8251>

The main contact at the Rainbow Flag Sperm Bank isn't a member of this group, though I have forwarded your comments. I have to say though, that on the occasions I have spoken to him, he has seemed very friendly and laid-back, and I've never heard anyone else say anything bad about him. He is also very much in favour of the rights of the child. Rainbow Flag are the ONLY sperm bank to tell the mother who the donor is when the child is three months old. They limit their donors to have children by only 4-6 different women. Other sperm banks have used donors to produce children by literally hundreds of different women. If you're comparing them with the big commercial banks, then you may not have read about some of the stories involving them. I think it's highly unlikely that Rainbow Flag would ignore a donor's warning about a family history of kidney disease, then lie about it, and even erase hand-written warnings from evidence presented in court. That's just what another sperm bank did:

<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/data2/californiastatecases/b155896.doc>

I would trust Rainbow Flag more than any other sperm bank not to ignore or withhold important medical information from potential or actual recipients. I can't see an article like the following involving them for instance:

<http://www.donorsiblingregistry.com/The%20Truth%20About%20Donor%201084.pdf>

[or <http://tinyurl.com/y2u6wp>]

If I was looking for a donor through a sperm bank, Rainbow Flag would be my first choice. I'm not gay btw, and despite their web address, they are open to heterosexual donors and recipients. The Sperm Bank of California would be my second choice btw. As far as circumcision goes, this may not be the right forum to discuss it, but I am very much in favour of Rainbow Flag's anti-circ stance, and will debate the issue privately with anyone who cares. I believe that the more you know about circumcision, the less likely you will be to support it.

1/8/07 <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DonorSiblingRegistry/message/8245>

Rainbow Flag Health Services is run by two circumcised Jewish men, and has a policy that both male and female offspring should NOT be circumcised.

From their homepage:

<http://www.gayspermbank.com/>

<<As a member of Nurses for the Rights of the Child, we believe that a child's human rights are paramount. We ethically cannot offer our services to those who intend to harm their children through the practice of ritual or "medical" genital mutilation (of either gender, commonly known as circumcision) or other forms of child abuse. As health professionals, we know there are no valid medical reasons for this, and as Jewish men who are survivors of ritual genital mutilation, we cannot ethically participate in assisting others in continuing this practice. See our Philosophy page for more information.>>

From their philosophy page:

<http://www.gayspermbank.com/philosophy.htm>

<<Another area of concern to Rainbow Flag Health Services is "any risk of harm to the child or children who may be born, including the risk of neglect or abuse".* Therefore, Rainbow Flag Health Services cannot offer its services to those who, it feels, are at risk for physically, sexually or psychologically abusing children. Abuse includes the practices of male or female genital mutilation, commonly referred to as circumcision.

With reference to this issue and religious freedom: A human being is not born with a particular set of religious beliefs. A child, born from parents of a particular religion, is not a member of that religion by choice. The issue is not the religious freedom of the parents, but the human rights of the child. When there is a clash between children's human rights and parental rites, Rainbow Flag Health Services is on the side of the children. "The constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion do not sanction harming another person in the practice of one's religion." Committee on Bioethics, American Academy of Pediatrics, Pediatrics, January 1988.

For further information on Male Genital Mutilation (circumcision) please refer to the following pages NOHARMM (National Organization to Halt the Abuse and Routine Mutilation of Males), Circumcision Information and Resource Pages, and our own Links page.

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If you were running a sperm bank in a country where female circumcision was common, you might want the

same policy. If you think there's a big difference between male circumcision and the most common forms of female circumcision, you need to find out more.

1/8/07 | <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DonorSiblingRegistry/message/8241>

Rainbow Flag Health Services, <http://www.gayspermbank.com/> (which, despite their name, recruits heterosexual as well as gay & bi-sexual donors) tells the mother who the donor is when the child is 3 months old.

8/16/06 | <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DonorSiblingRegistry/message/7744>

Another sperm bank to check out is Rainbow Flag, <http://www.gayspermbank.com/> which despite its URL, is not just for lesbian women or gay donors. I don't know if they are non-profit, but they are absolutely committed to the practice of donor identity release & other ethical issues as well.

8/28/05 | http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DSR_Discussion/message/963

Sperm banks usually define 'region' as an area having a population of 100,000. This means that, in Metro Toronto (where I am) which has a population of 3,000,000, 1 donor could have as many as $3,000,000/100,000 \times 10 = 300$ offspring.

[from moderator ML: I don't know what definition CCB use, but the ASRM now recommends a cutoff of 25 pregnancies per region defining "region" as a population of 800,000.

Every sperm bank seems to handle this differently. The Rainbow Flag sperm bank says "We limit our donors to have children by only 4-6 different women." The Sperm Bank of California says: "Our limit is ten families worldwide for each donor."

It is possible for US donors to donate at more than one sperm bank since there is no central register.]

6/25/05 | http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/DSR_Discussion/message/722

Or the Rainbow Flag Sperm Bank in California:

<http://www.gayspermbank.com/>

<<We are the only sperm bank to tell the mother who the donor is when the child is three months old. We ask that the mother contact the donor by the child's first birthday. We limit our donors to have children by only 4-6 different women. Other sperm banks use a donor to produce children by 10 different women! Some banks have no limits!>>

Most women probably won't want donor contact so early, but for others it may be the ideal solution.

Despite their name, they also take heterosexual recipients and donors. They also ship to most US states.