

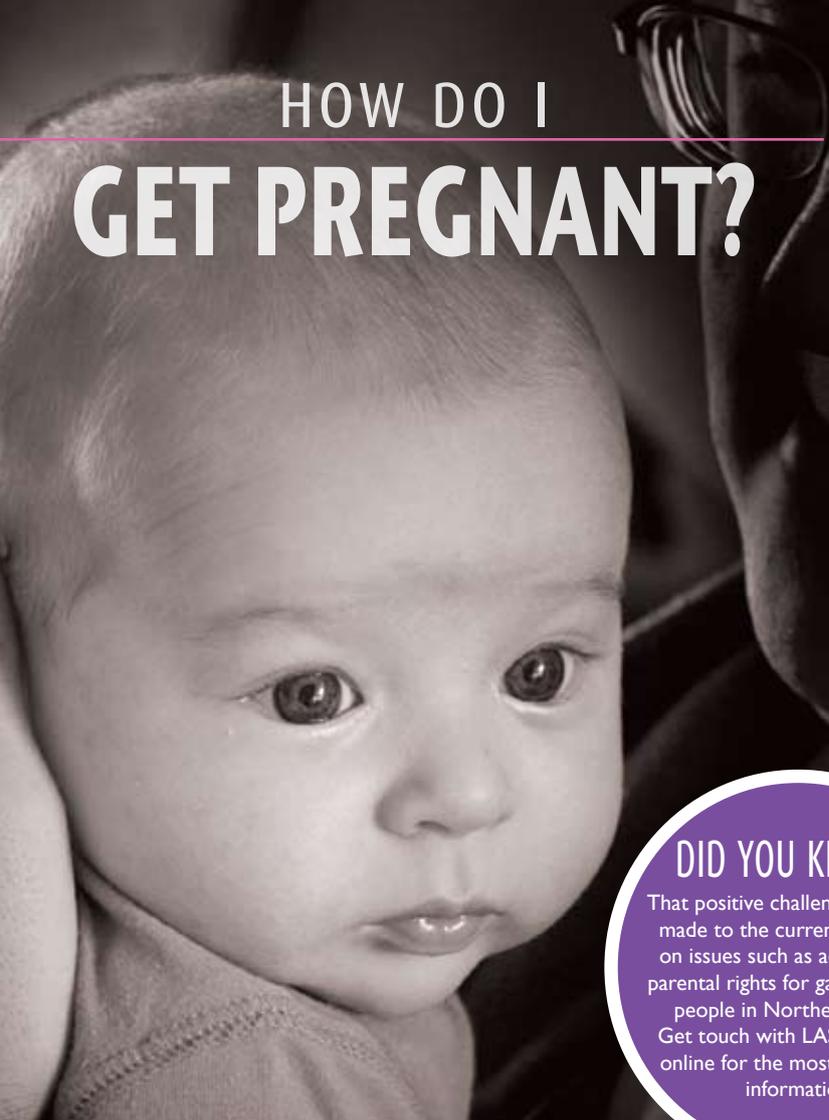
the lesbian guide to

GETTING PREGNANT

lasi

lesbian advocacy
services initiative





HOW DO I GET PREGNANT?

For many lesbian and bisexual women, starting a family is a rewarding and life changing experience. But whether you're single or in a couple, there are some big things to consider before getting pregnant.

It may seem like an obvious thing to think about before deciding to have a baby but, especially if you're in a relationship, it's important to consider what you want in relation to parenting. Decisions you make early on can impact on you, your partner and your child later, so it's good to talk about what might work best for all of you.

not to actively include the father or sperm donor in your child's life.

There are no right or wrong choices and different options seem to suit different people.

There are plenty of books and web resources now available on the subject; just do a search for "lesbian parenting" and you'll find women talking about their own experiences. Many of these resources aren't local to Northern Ireland however, so this booklet will help you to fill in the gaps with some of the questions you might have.

DID YOU KNOW...

That positive challenges are being made to the current legislation on issues such as adoption and parental rights for gay and lesbian people in Northern Ireland. Get touch with LASI or visit us online for the most up-to-date information

You'll have to make choices about how you conceive, about parental roles in your relationship and whether or

CONCEPTION

1. Self-Insemination

Many lesbian and bisexual women choose self-insemination to conceive.

This is when a donor – usually a close friend – provides fresh sperm, which is then inserted into the vagina around the time you expect to ovulate.

It is important that you get a full medical history from any donor, and that you and the donor are both tested for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). There are websites such as Pride Angel that give advice on the type of medical information you should consider when finding a donor. If you are not in a civil partnership, the donor is legally recognized as having parental rights to the child you conceive with his help. If you are in a civil partnership you can arrange for your female partner to be recognized as the child's legal parent.

2. Private fertility care

Origin Fertility is the only private fertility centre in Northern Ireland and they provide services such as IUI, IVF, and a range of other tests and services such as counseling.

For more information, visit www.originfertilitycare.com

3. Publicly Funded Treatment

The NHS can help with donor insemination (IUI) or in-vitro fertilization (IVF) to help you get pregnant, but only if you have a fertility issue. To be eligible, you to have been trying to get pregnant without medical help for at least two years and it must be proven that you have a medical condition such as polycystic ovaries that makes conception difficult.

This might not make a lot of sense if you are in a relationship with another woman, who can't get you pregnant, but it is



because the current law was designed to meet the needs of straight couples.

The fertility clinic in Northern Ireland is in the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast, and your GP has to refer you.

In the UK, all children conceived through a registered fertility clinic (either through the NHS or a private clinic) have a right to receive details about the sperm donor when they turn 18.

“Talking with other lesbian couples who'd been through the process together was so valuable to us. They can tell you lots of practical things that you never find in books!”

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Support

Starting a family can be a wonderful but also challenging and emotional journey for many lesbian and bisexual women, so it's important that you have people to talk to and get support from. LASI currently runs a Family Group for lesbian and bisexual women who have children or want to start a family. This group meets on a regular basis to share information, socialise and informally talk about issues and experiences they face as parents and mothers-to-be.

Contact LASI to join the Family Group or for more information and support.

Adoption

The law does not currently allow same-sex couples to adopt. Lesbian & Gay people can apply as individuals and, if in a couple, both partners will be assessed together but only one person will be the adoptive parent. However, due to provisions in the Civil Partnership Act 2004, people in a civil partnership cannot adopt, even as individuals. This legislation is currently being challenged in the courts, so check our website or sign up to the LASI newsletter for updates.

Your Rights

Civil partnership doesn't automatically confer parental responsibility but lesbian and gay co-parents can apply for parental responsibility.

Seek legal advice from a solicitor specialising in family law.

Statutory "Paternity" Leave, Pay and the right to request flexible working hours applies to lesbian and gay co-parents the same as heterosexual co-parents. If you have any difficulties in these areas, you can contact the Equality Commission's enquiry line on **028 90 890 890**, talk to your union or contact LASI.

Things to talk to your GP about

- Advice on fertility options
- Health screening
- Emotional support for you and your partner
- Referrals to specialist treatment
- Signposting to private services

Contact us if you'd like support with talking to your GP.

LASI Health Programme Funded by



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For more information contact LASI:
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