

For those of us lucky enough to become parents, having a child brings an incredible amount of joy and fulfillment to our lives. Although parenting is never easy, being a parent is something many of us never even give much thought to, it just happens - naturally and easily.

For some people, having a child is a dream, and they may or may not be able to actualize it on their own. This guide will help you understand more about becoming a Surrogate and how you can change someone's life while benefiting your own family in a financially and emotionally impactful way.

Our goal is to help you determine if becoming a Surrogate is the right decision for you and your family. We will give you an overview of surrogacy, outline the process and requirements of becoming a Surrogate, and answer some of the most commonly asked questions.

## What is surrogacy

Surrogacy is the term used to describe an arrangement where a woman agrees to carry a baby for an individual or a couple, which are called an Intended Parent or Intended Parents. The two types of surrogacy are traditional surrogacy and gestational surrogacy.

**Traditional surrogacy** has been around since biblical times (although these days it's very uncommon, and it's not something we offer at Physician's Surrogacy). In traditional surrogacy, a woman will provide her own eggs to create a pregnancy (using IVF) and therefore shares a genetic link with the baby she will help create for the Intended Parent(s). Many people remember the sensational story of Michael Jackson's youngest child, Blanket Jackson. Blanket (who has now legally changed his name to Bigi) came into this world with the help of a traditional Surrogate and Jackson's sperm. For many reasons, traditional surrogacy has become less popular, and now people that require an egg donor will typically directly utilize an egg donor and then have the resulting embryo carried by a Gestational Surrogate.

**Gestational surrogacy** is the process in which a woman carries a pregnancy and delivers a child for another individual or couple. Unlike traditional surrogacy, in this case, the pregnancy is achieved using either the intended mother or an egg donor's egg. The sperm comes from either the intended father or from a sperm donor. In this case, the Surrogate is called a "gestational carrier" For good reason - she is carrying a baby but does not have any genetic link to the child.

Because the Surrogate and the baby share no genetic connection, gestational surrogacy is generally less complicated in both the legal sense and for the ethical concerns of "giving away one's child." In gestational surrogacy, it's the Intended Parent's child, and the Surrogate, who is not biologically related, is helping them achieve parenthood.

There are generally two types of gestational surrogacy, altruistic surrogacy, and compensated surrogacy. Altruistic surrogacy is probably the greatest gift of compassion one could ever offer because it's done without any compensation and usually by a member of the family. More commonly, gestational Surrogates today are both providing a family a gift and being compensated, which is widely known as commercial surrogacy. It is essential to clarify that compensated gestational Surrogates are not doing it because they "need" the money but are committed to helping a family become whole. We firmly believe women should be compensated for gestational surrogacy and seek out women who are motivated for reasons beyond just the money and committed to the process.

## Why is surrogacy done?

Infertility is more common than you think. Today, in the United States, one in eight couples struggle with infertility. Worldwide there are 50 to 80 million people affected by infertility.

This staggering number does not even take into consideration those that aren't infertile but are unable to have a child on their own. In today's society, many women delay family creation dreams to pursue their careers or because they haven't found "the one." Often, when these women are finally ready to create their families, they face obstacles and are unable to do it on their own. The statistics in the paragraph above don't account for individuals who don't have a partner or same-sex couples who are unable to achieve pregnancy without the assistance of a Surrogate.

Surrogacy has the power to impact future generations. Surrogacy helps both individuals and couples, those with medical problems, biological limitations, and those who otherwise would have missed their window of opportunity.

## Who are Surrogates?

Let's take a look at a few of our past Surrogates to help give you insight into the many women that decided to help others create the family of their dreams.

- *Marley I., Seattle, WA:* Marley had initially become a Surrogate for her brother and sister-in-law after they had recurrent miscarriages. For Marley, it was an easy and rewarding experience for her, so she has decided to make a second journey for another family.
- *Yessenia R. Long Beach, CA:* Yessenia is a community college student. She had her son in her late teens and took some time off of school to have the baby and to focus on work. Yessenia learned about surrogacy after watching her cousin go through the process. She decided to go back to school full-time and make her first surrogacy journey while she's in school. This decision is allowing her an opportunity to take a break from working, focus on school, and to be able to spend more time with her son.
- *Julie L., San Diego, CA:* Julie is a medical assistant in an OB/GYN office and a single mom to a beautiful 6-year-old daughter. Her daughter is the light of her eyes, and she couldn't imagine what her life would be like without her. Julie decided to become a Surrogate after working closely with a Surrogate at work. As she watched the pregnancy progress, she was able to see the experiences the Surrogate and Intended Parents shared and decided to make a journey to help another family experience that same joy.
- *Maura T. Reno, NV:* Maura, is married with three young children. Their family was complete, but she had a friend from church who was struggling to get pregnant. She had always been one of those women that loved being pregnant, and she and her husband decided they could help her friend carry. Luckily, Maura's friend got pregnant naturally, but they felt it was their calling to help another family and their way of giving back to the community.
- *Claire H., Lancaster, CA:* Claire is from a military family and planned her journey when her husband was ready to go away on his final deployment, which was a 14-month assignment. She decided to help the family transition to retirement by making a surrogacy journey, which allowed her to make an impact socially and allowed them to make a down payment on a home.

## What drew these women to becoming Surrogates?

- Some have dreamt about being able to help another woman or family their whole life
- Some know surrogacy is right for them the moment they learn about it
- Other women enjoy being pregnant, and although their family is complete, they know they can help others
- Many Surrogates have been through difficult situations or times in their lives and love the idea of helping another family

As you can see, Surrogates come from every family type and region - and they all share the common bond of wanting to help other people create the family they have longed for. Listen to one of our 2-time Surrogates, Devon, who forever changes the lives of two families by helping them experience the joy of parenthood. In the video below, she explains how she learned about our surrogacy agency, what her journey as a Surrogate was like and why she decided to do it again.



## Surrogacy Criteria

Wondering what it takes to become a Surrogate? While criteria vary slightly from agency to agency, the guidelines have been put in place to physically and legally protect both the Surrogate and the Intended Parents. The following are common guidelines:

- Between the ages of 21 and 37 years old
- Have at least one child of her own
- She must be a US citizen or a US permanent resident
- A resident of California, Colorado, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Illinois or Texas
- She must be of a healthy weight (BMI <32)
- Be able to pass a background screening and no criminal history of felonies
- Not on anti-depressant or anti-anxiety medications
- A non-smoker and no drug use
- She must have had a child within the last seven years
- No significant complications during pregnancy.

The easiest way to see if you qualify is to complete an application. An application is not a commitment. It is merely allowing your qualification to be reviewed and letting you know if you are eligible to be a Surrogate with our program. **If you would like to be sent an application, please contact me and I will get one to you immediately!**

## What is the Process of Becoming a Surrogate?



The following is a step-by-step overview of the entire surrogacy process and above is a brief presentation by our President and Chief Medical Officer, Dr. David Harari, who has practiced as an OB/GYN for over 30 years.

### **Step 1: Application Process**

The application will show you if you meet the qualifications for surrogacy. The entire application process can be done from the comfort of your home and is entirely private. You will complete your application online and will know within 24 hours if you meet the qualifications. If you do, you will attend a brief virtual phone interview with one of our intake coordinators. The discussion will allow you to learn more about the program and have any questions you may have answered.

If accepted, you will receive program acceptance documents outlining all the details about requirements, expectations, and your compensation. You (and your partner) will sign the paperwork over DocuSign, and you're officially on your way to becoming a Surrogate.

After your interview and documents are complete, you will enter our pre-screening process, which includes:

- A comprehensive household background check
- A comprehensive review of past pregnancy and delivery records to make surrogacy is safe for you and your family
- Prescreening lab work which will take place near your home

### **Step 2: Matching Process**

During your initial interview, we talk about your vision for your surrogacy journey. The session normally explores your preferences regarding the amount of contact and the types of families you would like to work with as a Surrogate. When creating a match for your surrogacy journey, we align your preferences with those of your prospective Intended Parents to create the perfect synergy. Some of our Surrogates will even write a letter to prospective Intended Parents, telling them more about themselves, why they decided to become a Surrogate, and what they are most looking forward to. It's not required, but it allows the Intended Parents to get to know a little more about you.

Once an Intended Parent selects your profile, you and your family will have an opportunity to have a “meet & greet” over video chat. It’s a great time to get to know one another and ask each other questions. Typically, the “match” between you and the Intended Parents is made official following the meet & greet, and your journey begins.

### **Step 3: Screening Process**

The Surrogacy screening process is the final step before moving on to the legal contract. It allows a licensed psychologist and your Intended Parents IVF doctor to confirm that you are a qualified candidate. Frequently, both the psychological screening and medical screening can happen on the same day. In many cases, the psychological evaluation can even take place remotely from the convenience of your own home.

The medical screening takes place on-site at the IVF center your Intended Parents are working with, and you will travel to the center for a single screening appointment. **If you match with an Intended Parent whose IVF center is not local to you, this will be the first time you are required to travel. The only other time will be for the embryo transfer. If you need to travel, all expenses and travel arrangements will be taken care of for you.)**

Typically, the IVF center will issue the results of the screening and a medical clearance letter within two weeks.

### **Step 4: The Legal Process**

Once you receive your medical clearance, you will move on to the legal contract phase. You and the Intended Parent(s) will be appointed a dedicated attorney to represent you, and they specialize in third-party reproduction. Your lawyer will assist you with the Gestational Surrogacy Agreement (surrogacy contract) phase and represent you and your interests throughout your journey. This contract lays the foundation of your surrogacy arrangement before, during, and after the pregnancy. **This contract clearly outlines everyone's expectations, and your legal team will be there to support you. They will ensure that you are protected throughout the process.** The legal process typically takes two to four weeks.

### **Step 5: IVF Process**

#### **Preparation phase**

Once the legal agreement is complete, your IVF center will create a cycle calendar. The calendar will include medication information, appointments, and significant milestones. You will work with your IVF coordinator and IVF doctor, who will go over the medications, instructions on use and will be your point of contact for all medical guidelines from your screening until you graduate at the end of the first trimester.

#### **Embryo Transfer**

During your IVF cycle, you will continue to monitor at a facility near your home. The monitoring is vital to track your progress as you prepare for the embryo transfer. **The embryo transfer will occur approximately four weeks after the start of your medication.**

You and your support person will travel to the IVF clinic. We take care of all accommodations for you and make sure you have a comfortable environment to relax in. The transfer itself is about a ten-minute non-surgical procedure, and your physician will require you to be on bed rest for 24 hours following the embryo transfer. After the transfer, appointments for blood work and your pregnancy tests will be made locally to you to monitor your hormone levels.

### Confirmation of Pregnancy

Approximately two to three weeks of the transfer, a heartbeat ultrasound will take place to confirm the pregnancy. After confirming your pregnancy, the IVF center will continue to supervise you for several more weeks. Once the pregnancy is stable, you will be placed under the care of a local OB to support you for the remainder of the pregnancy.

### Step 6: OB/GYN Supervised Pregnancy

At Physician's Surrogacy, our medical team closely monitors your pregnancy through constant communication with your OB. Your dedicated Surrogate support case manager will be with you at every step of the way. You'll be introduced to your Surrogate community and participate in virtual support groups. During the entire process and beyond the delivery, you will have unlimited access to a psychologist. Your Intended Parents will also have their personal case manager to keep them updated on the medical progress of your pregnancy and support any needs they may have. **Unlike your pregnancies, you will have an entire team rather than just one doctor supporting you throughout the pregnancy.**

### Step 7: Delivery

Before the delivery of the baby, our team will work with you and the Intended Parents to create a birth plan to ensure that everyone is on the same page throughout the delivery. This birth plan will be sent to the birth office at your local hospital before delivery, leaving you and the Intended Parents to only focus on this final milestone of your surrogacy journey.

### Step 8: After Delivery Support

Once the baby is born, for an additional 3—6 months, you will continue to participate in our program and have access to all of our resources, such as support groups and your psychologist. Many of our Surrogates and their families enjoy the positive experience so much; they decide to come back for another journey.

## How much do Surrogates get paid?

### First Time Surrogates Earn

\* Experienced Surrogates earn more

State	Employed	Unemployed
Southern California	\$ 60,000	\$ 53,500
Northern California, Nevada	\$ 55,000	\$ 48,500
Oregon, Illinois, Texas, Colorado, Washington	\$ 50,000	\$ 43,500

As a Surrogate, you deserve generous compensation for both your time and effort. Traditionally, surrogacy compensation has been a combination of a base amount, called base compensation, plus a variable benefits package. This arrangement can be confusing, especially when first looking into surrogacy because there's not a guarantee of the exact amount you'll receive for your generous contribution.

**The compensation table to the left outlines the starting compensation for 1<sup>st</sup>-time Surrogates.** Our Surrogates receive more, and it's clearly illustrated with a fixed compensation package than with a line item package. Surrogates are also paid more upfront during the beginning of their journey with this structure. Because your compensation is predefined and not on reimbursements, there is less tedious paperwork. This structure eliminates the need for submitting miscellaneous expenses such as childcare, mileage, pay stubs, and instead, we pay you, and

then you can directly take care of those expenses. Our Intended Parents also like this compensation more because it's straightforward – they know up front exactly what they will be paying and can plan accordingly.

We believe that you should have a clear understanding of your financial opportunities from the start. We provide a desirable flat-rate compensation structure that is easy to understand, and we are 100% transparent about how much we pay. Below we'll outline the distribution.

### **Pre-Pregnancy Benefit**

Our compensation structure is structured to reward you both before you are pregnant and once on your journey. With Physician's Surrogacy, you can earn \$11,000 before you are even pregnant. There are bonuses for important milestones – such as medical clearance, legal contract signing, and the embryo transfer. You will also receive a monthly payment, which is called your pre-pregnancy benefits. \$10,000 of your total compensation will be set aside for pre-pregnancy payments. Anything that you don't receive before you're pregnant will transfer to your pregnancy benefit.

### **Pregnancy Benefit**

Your pregnancy compensation is divided into equal lump sum monthly payments, starting with the first month you receive confirmation of pregnancy (COP). The payments average typically between \$4000 and \$6000 or more each month, allowing you to plan for what you will receive and how you will spend it. Compensation depends on a variety of factors; once you complete your application, the intake coordinator will outline your specific compensation, helping you understand your benefits and financially plan. They can even show you ways to increase your earnings.

### **Escrow**

All funds related to your surrogacy are held in a trust account that is managed by an experienced law firm or escrow company so that all monies due to you for your Surrogate compensation are secured and paid on time. Before you start your process, the Intended Parents will deposit all of your compensation into this escrow account, so you are comfortable knowing the money is there. You will receive everything precisely as it is outlined in your contract. All financial matters will be handled by the surrogacy agency and the escrow company, removing this component from your relationship with the Intended Parents.

## **Why become a Surrogate with Physician's Surrogacy?**

**We are not just an agency. Physician's Surrogacy is the nation's only physician-managed surrogacy agency. With dedicated physicians managing your journey from application to beyond delivery, we provide you an unparalleled advantage over a traditional agency.**

### **The Physician's Surrogacy Difference**

The science and technology of IVF has evolved over the last 40 years; however, the evolution of most surrogacy agencies has not followed that same course. A staggering 95% of all surrogacy agencies today are started and managed by attorney's, former Surrogates, or Intended Parents. While they may understand the legal and emotional aspects of surrogacy, they don't have the medical background, skills, or resources to manage the critical elements of this medical process effectively.

We provide you the advantage of a dedicated, physician-guided, surrogacy journey.

### **Family is our Motivation**

Family is the motivation behind our team. Our multilingual staff is made up of industry-leading doctors, and they're also compassionate people who've had personal experience with the surrogacy process or are called to it, just like you. We welcome you with open arms into our family here at Physician's Surrogacy.

## What Does the Physician's Advantage Mean for You?

### Your Safety is Our Number One Priority

Our physician-designed surrogacy agency model centers around professional care. We make the surrogacy journey easy for you by creating a medical pre-screening process near your home. When admitted into our program, you will not only receive support from your managing OB, but our well-trained physicians will also be there to help ensure a safe and smooth surrogacy journey.

### Compensation

You deserve to be compensated for your effort, time, and sacrifices. We also think you should know the financial opportunities you have from the get-go. We offer an attractive compensation package that is simple to understand and let you know how much we pay from the beginning. All our surrogates are paid a fixed amount during their journey. Furthermore, we give our surrogate moms the chance to form a long-term partnership with us.

### Coordination Support

Our expert team will see you through every step of the surrogacy process and handle the details for you. At some other agencies, you may be in charge of the logistics or need to have a separate contact for each part like insurance, escrow, legal, etc. Aside from making the whole process complicated and time-consuming, these can also make it hard to coordinate.

### Expert Team

A team of experienced physicians will support you and help ensure you get the best care at all times. Our program simplifies the surrogacy journey and ranks **50** percent more than the national average for premature births.

### Surrogacy Sisterhood

We urge our surrogate moms to create bonds with one another. You are going to have enough opportunities to build these long-lasting relationships. These friendships can provide you unbeatable support and build bonds that will last all your life.

### Lifetime Opportunity

You can rely on our medical expertise and support during your surrogacy journey and after giving birth to the baby. A lot of our surrogates and their family members so much enjoy the great experience that they choose to come back for a new journey.

## Are You Ready to Learn More?

Whether now is the time to become a Surrogate or not, **there is no better time than now to learn more about surrogacy, determine if it is right for you and your family, and see if you qualify.**

The easiest way to know if you are eligible is to complete an application. An application is not a commitment; it is merely allowing your qualification to be reviewed and letting you know if you qualify to be a Surrogate with our program. **If you would like to be sent an application, please contact me and I will get one to you immediately!**

Remember, as a Surrogate; you will never be required to give anything up. There is no biological connection between you and the baby. It's the Intended Parents baby, and you will go home from the hospital to your family with the heartwarming feeling of how you have forever changed the lives of others. You are the only one that has the power to make this kind of impact, and the intended parent will never be able to thank you enough.