

2022

# Quadrangle Handbook for Fertility Options in NL

*What to Expect when you are trying to Expect*

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## Introduction

This handbook was created by Bachelor of Science in Nursing students from Memorial University of Newfoundland in partnership with Quadrangle NL.

Quadrangle NL is a community-based organization that provides programs and services to 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, and their mission is to be a resource in building community connection amongst the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Quadrangle would like to break the silence on specific problems faced by the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and raise awareness about those issues. Therefore, as a group, we met with our key informant from Quadrangle, Charlie Murphy, who stated that there is a lack of information available for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals surrounding the topic of adoption, surrogacy, and fertility services. This handbook was created in an effort to address this issue.

## Description of Resource

This handbook includes a description of adoption, surrogacy, intrauterine insemination, in-vitro fertilization, and fertility preservation, as well as the costs and wait times associated with these services. This handbook also includes information regarding which services are available in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) as well as funding in NL.

This resource was designed to provide information to 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals who are seeking information about adoption, fertility, and surrogacy services and how to start a family. However, anyone can benefit from the information included in this handbook.

## Handbook Goal

The goal of this handbook is to provide 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals with accurate and easily accessible information regarding adoption, surrogacy, and fertility services to help them start a family.

## Handbook Objectives

- To describe adoption, surrogacy, and fertility services and the associated costs in NL.
- To provide a list of the adoption, surrogacy, and fertility services available in NL.
- To provide information regarding the funding and coverage available in NL for these services.

## Fertility Options and Associated Costs in NL

There are several different fertility options available that the 2SLGBTQIA+ community can explore.

### Adoption

Adoption is a route many individuals of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community may want to avail of when looking at ways to start a family. The resource “Adoption Acts, 2013” is a good resource when looking at the specifics of adoption. Here we will provide a breakdown of the key points of adoption.

To begin the process of adoption, adoptive parent(s) need to start an application with their local social worker with an adoption service program at Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD). To adopt in NL, the future parents need to be residents of this province ("In Care and Adoption - Children, Seniors and Social Development ", 2022).

There are different types of adoption that individuals can use when adopting children, one being domestic adoption which takes place in this province. If people want to adopt a child under 24 months of age, the provincial waiting period can be as long as eight years. If the adoptive parent(s) want to adopt a child over the age of 24 months, wait times are usually shorter and are dependent upon the number of older children waiting for adoption at the time. Interprovincial adoption is another type of adoption, this is when you adopt a child in another province or territory in Canada; when choosing this route parent(s) need to be eligible for any requirements in the province or territory you are applying to adopt from. If you choose this route CSSD will help facilitate the adoption with adoption authorities in the province of which the child resides. Lastly, Intercountry is another type of adoption, this is when parent(s) apply to adopt a child

from a foreign country. Like interprovincial adoption the adoptive parent/parents must meet NL requirements for adoption as well as the country of choice. One key finding with intercountry adoption is, you will have to use a private adoption agency which can be quite expensive and there are none located in NL currently ("In Care and Adoption - Children, Seniors and Social Development ", 2022).

One cost that will be present with any type of adoption are the cost of the legal fees when going through the adoptive process. Added costs can include the use of private adoption agencies as stated above with intercountry adoptions.

## Surrogacy

Surrogacy is another option that members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community can avail of when exploring ways to start a family. In Canada, gestational surrogacy is legal and this type of surrogacy involves implanting a genetically unrelated embryo into the uterus of the surrogate. Surrogacy is an option that is achieved through in-vitro fertilization (IVF) and the surrogate has no biological relations to the child (Hambleton, 2021).

If individuals choose to explore the surrogacy option they will need to find a surrogacy agency to connect with; this can be referred by your family physician or doing research online. When you are connected with an agency you will fill out documents and paperwork that will help create an account, which will then be used to connect you with a surrogate that will fit your family. Once a surrogate is chosen through the connection process, meetings will be set to further make plans which will then include meeting with your attorney to draft and negotiate surrogate agreements.

Costs associated with surrogacy are the legal fees of the intended parents as well as the surrogate. While in Canada it is illegal to pay your surrogate, you are however required to pay for the IVF treatment, expenses of donor sperm and/or eggs if needed, travel-related expenses, expenditures to care for dependents of the surrogate if applicable, medications, clothing, and many other expenses the surrogate would face relating to the pregnancy (Health Canada, 2020). “The Assisted Human Reproduction Act” (AHR Act) is a helpful resource for finding specific information about surrogacy in Canada (Health Canada, 2020).

Finding a surrogate in Canada can be difficult as it was reported that there is a surrogate shortage in Canada. Therefore, it can take up to a year or longer to find a surrogate right for your family. Once the surrogate is found, there may be wait times for the IVF process depending on if the first round is successful and the legal process of formulating agreements within the surrogacy relationship. Overall, there is no ‘set’ timeline for surrogacy; it has the potential to be a shorter process or a longer process (“Here Is How to Become or Find a Surrogate Mother in Canada”, 2021).

### **Intrauterine Insemination**

IUI, or artificial insemination, is a common fertility treatment that can be completed in NL. With IUI, the sperm are washed, and then healthy sperm are inserted directly into the uterus to improve the likelihood that the sperm will fertilize the egg. To increase the chances of a successful procedure, a doctor may prescribe medications to help mature the eggs, as well as to induce ovulation before the sperm is inserted into the uterus (What is IUI, n.d.).

IUI is covered by Newfoundland and Labrador's provincial insurance, excluding the price of the sperm (which varies from each catalogue), and the shipping costs associated with this,

which averages \$150 (Fertility Options In Newfoundland Labrador, 2020). Additionally, sperm wash is required for IUI, and, in NL, sperm wash costs clients \$150 (Sperm Wash, 2018).

### **In-Vitro Fertilization**

Each cycle of IVF takes approximately six weeks. In IVF, medications are used to mature the eggs. A procedure is then performed to retrieve the eggs, which are brought to a lab where they are mixed with sperm in order to fertilize the eggs. Another procedure, an embryo transfer, is then completed to insert the embryos into the uterus, with the hope that a fertilized egg will implant itself into the uterus' lining, resulting in pregnancy. To increase the likelihood of the embryo surviving inside the uterus, a doctor may also prescribe progesterone to take after the embryo transfer (What is IVF, n.d.).

The first five weeks of IVF can be completed in NL, but participants must travel out of province to receive the embryo transfer (Fertility Options In Newfoundland Labrador, 2020). Between the cost of treatments and the associated travel costs, individuals have to pay thousands of dollars for this treatment, which is partially covered by MCP.

There are several costs associated with in-vitro fertilization. A general ballpark for prices associated with just the treatment itself are as follows: sperm storage costs around \$200 per year, frozen donor eggs/embryos from the United States can cost \$18,000 or more, and a vial of donor sperm is about \$1000 (Dunne, 2018). This leads to IVF treatment costing about \$12,250 and \$77,750 per round, which is not fully covered under provincial health insurance in Newfoundland and Labrador, and this cost does not include the additional expense of donor eggs or sperm if needed (Fertility Options In Newfoundland Labrador, 2020).

### **Fertility Preservation**



Another service available is fertility preservation. This allows people to cryopreserve eggs, embryos, or sperm, which can later be used to have biological children (Access to fertility services, 2015).

These options would be particularly beneficial for those who are transgender. Fertility preservation options are available for trans women and trans men. Trans women can cryopreserve their semen, either before or after starting hormone therapy, although there is less certainty surrounding the viability of the semen in those who have started hormone therapy. Trans men have the option to cryopreserve oocytes or embryos, which can be done both before and after starting hormone therapy (Sterling & Garcia, 2020).

## Services Available in NL

There is only one fertility clinic in NL - the Newfoundland and Labrador Fertility Services (NLFS) clinic. Becoming a client at this clinic requires a referral from an OBGYN or a family doctor. Before a client can undergo IVF or IUI, they will have to undergo diagnostic testing, including blood tests and ultrasounds, to assess their cycle and fertility (Fertility Options In Newfoundland Labrador, 2020).

Unfortunately, there are limited fertility services available in NL. The clinic does offer IUI treatments, but, for IVF, out of province travel is required to complete the embryo transfer (Fertility Options In Newfoundland Labrador, 2020).

In NL, people who wish to adopt should contact a social worker in their region with the Adoption Services Programs at CSSD as they have a crucial role in placing children with adoptive parent(s). The province currently does not have any private adoption agencies, making it difficult for individuals/couples who want to adopt out of the country. However, if individuals are looking to adopt out of the province, the program at CSSD will approve or deny applications to adopt a child from other Canadian provinces and territories as well as foreign countries. There are options for adoption within NL, but the waiting period can be extensive depending on the number of children available for adoption during the time you wish to adopt ("In Care and Adoption - Children, Seniors and Social Development", 2022). An anonymous informant expressed that, in NL, Adoption Services Programs at CSSD have a policy that they will not

accept adoption applications with more than two adoptive parents listed on the application. The anonymous informant indicated that this policy is not inclusive for non-monogamous families exploring adoption (Anonymous, personal communication, March 23rd, 2022).

### **Funding and Coverage Available in NL**

Little funding for fertility, surrogacy, and adoption services is available in NL. There are increased efforts to increase funding with fertility in NL.

IUI is a procedure that is covered under Newfoundland and Labrador's provincial insurance, however there are some exceptions to this coverage. As stated above, individuals must cover the cost of the sperm and sperm wash, as well as associated shipping costs.

In NL, IVF is not fully covered by MCP. There is however a subsidy of \$5,000 per IVF cycle which will be available to all applicants that meet the clinical eligibility. This subsidy will be given for up to a maximum of three IVF cycles throughout the individual's lifetime. Due to not being able to complete IVF in Newfoundland the program is going to provide assistance to those who must travel out of province to avail of IVF treatments and is an important step in the government's commitment to increase access to fertility treatments. For someone to be able to avail of the subsidy, the individual must have a valid MCP card, be referred for IVF services by the NLFS clinic to a Canadian IVF clinic of the individual's choice, be followed by NLFS for the duration of a pregnancy achieved through IVF, and not have previously received a provincial subsidy for more than three cycles of IVF services. It is important to note that this subsidy does not cover travel expenses within NL, therefore people who live outside the metro area have to pay for their own travel expenses to and from their appointments at NLFS. The eligible expenses are intended to provide some financial relief for IVF procedures at a fertility clinic and

prescribed medications associated with IVF procedures. These services and medications must be verified as not covered by an individual's private insurance. The program will be administered through the NLFS clinic and patients will need to provide verification of payment to the private IVF clinic in order to receive the subsidy. People who availed of IVF services in keeping with the guidelines of the subsidy since September 1, 2021, will qualify to get this subsidy (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2022).

Additionally, there is no coverage or funding known for the added costs associated with surrogacy, such as medications for the surrogate (Health Canada, 2020).

In NL, every new client at the fertility clinic will be offered a full fertility workup, including blood tests and ultrasounds. Depending on the outcome of these tests, some other diagnostic tests may be completed to evaluate your fertility. Most of this workup is covered by NL's provincial health insurance. Medications prescribed to help stimulate ovulation for fertility treatments may or may not be covered by insurance; this depends on the individual's specific healthcare coverage ("Fertility Options In Newfoundland Labrador", 2020).

The current Liberal Government announced in early 2021 that they are seeking to increase access to IVF services in NL, and are looking into funding for out of province expenses related to IVF as well as prescribed medications required with certain fertility treatments ("Supporting Fertility Treatments in Newfoundland and Labrador", 2022).

The lack of funding in NL is an ongoing issue that is supposedly being investigated and worked on to find a solution for individuals of NL who are in need of out of province fertility treatments to reduce the burden of cost.

## Resources

The Adoption Act (2013) is a resource that will provide you with detailed information about the process of adoption in NL.

- <https://assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statutes/a03-1.htm>

The Assisted Human Reproduction Act (2004) is a resource that is Canadian wide and you can refer to when wanting to know more about the process of surrogacy. You can refer to this resource to find specific information about what is prohibited in Canada if you choose this route and what is appropriate.

- <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/A-13.4/page-1.html>

## Private Adoption Agencies in Canada

Since Newfoundland and Labrador does not have any private adoption agencies, listed below are some options you could avail of throughout Canada:

- Alberta
  - Adoption Options
- Ontario
  - World View Adoption Association
- British Columbia
  - Sunrise Family Service Society
- Manitoba
  - UAS Eastern European Adoptions

For more information, please visit the following website:

- <https://www.canadaadopts.com/>

## Fertility Clinics in Partnership With the NLFS Clinic

### Halifax

#### Atlantic Assisted Reproductive Therapies

- The Atlantic Assisted Reproductive Therapies is a clinic that partners with the Newfoundland Fertility Clinic.
- To be seen at this clinic, you can be self-referred or be referred by a physician ("Atlantic Assisted Reproductive Therapies", 2022).
- This clinic offers many fertility services, including but not limited to ("Atlantic Assisted Reproductive Therapies", 2022):
  - IVF
  - IUI
  - Fertility Preservation
  - Gestational Carrier
- AART notes that they welcome people of all genders, sexual orientations and family structures; they service Atlantic Canada and beyond as well as single persons and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community ("Atlantic Assisted Reproductive Therapies", 2022).
- For information about the costs associated with the services offered at this clinic, click the following link:

- <https://aart.ca/fees>
- To visit their website, click the following link:
  - <https://aart.ca/>

## Ottawa

### Ottawa Fertility Centre

- The Ottawa Fertility Centre is a clinic that partners with the Newfoundland Fertility Clinic to support patients going through IVF.
- To be seen at the Ottawa Fertility Centre, you must be referred by a physician from the Newfoundland Fertility Clinic (“Ottawa Fertility Centre”, 2022).
- This clinic offers many fertility services, including but not limited to (“Ottawa Fertility Centre”, 2022):
  - Donor Insemination
  - In-Vitro Fertilization
  - Surrogacy
  - Fertility Preservation
- For information about the costs associated with the services offered at this clinic, click the following link:
  - <https://conceive.ca/fees/>
- To visit their website, click the following link:
  - <https://conceive.ca/>

## Calgary



## Regional Fertility Program

- The Regional Fertility Program Clinic in Calgary is a clinic that partners with the Newfoundland Fertility Clinic.
- This clinic offers many fertility services, including but not limited to ("Regional Fertility Program, 2022):
  - IVF
  - Transgender Sperm Cryopreservation
  - IUI
  - Donor Sperm
- For information about the costs associated with the services offered at this clinic, click the following link:
  - <https://regionalfertilityprogram.ca/ivfcsi-program/ivf-2/costsfees/>
- To visit their website, click the following link:
  - <https://regionalfertilityprogram.ca/>

## Fertility Clinics in Atlantic Canadian Provinces

There are several fertility clinics in Atlantic Canada, some of which are listed below.

### Nova Scotia

#### Atlantic Assisted Reproductive Therapies

- This clinic is described above under “Fertility Clinics in Partnership With the Newfoundland Fertility Clinic”.

### New Brunswick

#### Conceptia

- To be seen at this clinic, you must be referred by a family doctor, nurse practitioner, gynecologist, or urologist (*Conceptia*, n.d.).
- This clinic offers many fertility services, including but not limited to (*Conceptia*, n.d.):
  - Intrauterine Insemination
  - In-Vitro Fertilization
  - Embryo and Sperm Freezing
- For information about the costs associated with the services offered at this clinic, click the following link:
  - <https://conceptia.ca/en/financial-matters/fees>
- To visit their website, click the following link:
  - <https://conceptia.ca/en/>

## Fertility Clinics Throughout Canada

There are several fertility clinics throughout Canada, some of which are listed below.

### Montreal

#### The Montreal Fertility Center

- This fertility clinic is located in Montreal.
- To visit this clinic you have to call and book an appointment ("The Montreal Fertility Center", 2022).
- This clinic offers many fertility services, including but not limited to ("The Montreal Fertility Center", 2022):
  - IVF
  - Egg freezing
  - Donor Insemination
  - IUI
- For information about the costs associated with the services offered at this clinic, click the following link:
  - <https://www.montrealfertility.com/fees/>
- To visit their website, click the following link:
  - <https://www.montrealfertility.com/>

### Ontario, Toronto

#### Anova Fertility

- This clinic located in Toronto, Ontario requires you to book a consultation either on the phone or online ("Anova Fertility - Toronto IVF and Fertility Centre", 2022).
- This clinic offers many fertility services, including but not limited to ("Anova Fertility - Toronto IVF and Fertility Centre", 2022):
  - IUI
  - IVF
  - Egg Freezing
- To visit their website, click the following link:
  - <https://anovafertility.com/>

## Ontario, London

### CReATe Fertility London

- CReATe Fertility allows self referrals.
- Their mission is to provide natural, safe and affordable fertility care (CReATe Fertility, 2021).
- This clinic offers many fertility services, including but not limited to (CReATe Fertility, 2021):
  - IVF
  - Tests for Women
  - Tests for Men
- For information about the costs associated with the services offered at this clinic, there are no specified costs. Everyone's treatment plans are specialized therefore discussing with your fertility specialist will clarify the overall cost (CReATe Fertility, 2021).

- To visit their website, click the following link:
  - <https://www.createfertilitylondon.com/>

## Vancouver

### Pacific Centre for Reproductive Medicine

- You need a referral from a physician (family doctor, walk in clinic, OBGYN) to visit this clinic ("Fertility Clinic Vancouver | Pacific Centre for Reproductive Medicine", 2022).
- This clinic offers many fertility services, including but not limited to ("Fertility Clinic Vancouver | Pacific Centre for Reproductive Medicine", 2022):
  - IUI
  - IVF
  - Gestational Carrier & Surrogacy
  - Donor Sperm and Eggs
- For information about the costs associated with the services offered at this clinic, click the following link:
  - <https://pacificfertility.ca/fee-guide>
- To visit their website, click the following link:
  - <https://pacificfertility.ca/>

## Conclusion

This handbook is designed to help people, specifically 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, start a family by providing them with accurate and easily accessible information about adoption, surrogacy, and fertility services.

We would like to thank Charlie Murphy, the executive director of Quadrangle NL, for working with us on the development and implementation of this resource, which we hope will help 2SLGBTIA+ individuals in their journey to starting a family for years to come.

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## Appendix A

## Handbook Impact Evaluation Survey

This short-term evaluation tool will help us to evaluate how effective this resource was, and to evaluate what learning has occurred. To help us evaluate this resource, we ask that you complete our short survey, which can be accessed using:

<https://forms.gle/byVWzRZBSXW5YwF69>

### Impact Evaluation Tool

- 1) Did this handbook answer your questions about what each adoption, surrogacy, and fertility service consists of?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Somewhat
- 2) Do you feel more knowledgeable about the adoption, surrogacy, and fertility services available in NL?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Somewhat
- 3) Do you feel more knowledgeable about the costs, funding, and coverage available in NL for these services?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Somewhat

- 4) On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the best, and 1 being the worst, how helpful was this handbook in helping you to understand how to start a family?
- 5) If someone you knew was looking for information on adoption, surrogacy, and fertility services, would you recommend this handbook to them?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Maybe
- 6) How would you improve this handbook?

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