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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

So you want to make a baby. Or at least you're thinking about it. You've come to the right place! In this book, you will find everything you need to know about fertility and queer conception that was left out of your high school biology curriculum—and all the things your primary care doctor didn't know to tell you, that your fertility doctor overlooked, and that would have taken you months to glean off the internet, wading through cis/het-centered information. Here, you'll find evidence-based information that *actually* applies to LGBTQ+ people building families via pregnancy. Whether you pick up this book when you are ready to build your family, or years before, you will find vital information here.

If you are doing some exploratory research in hopes of someday building a family, please be sure to take a look at Chapter 1: Making Decisions and Creating a Timeline. This chapter will guide you in thinking about your options as well as when to get started, including the ideal time to cryopreserve your gametes (sperm or eggs) if you know you want to make a baby someday but you're not ready now.

If you are ready to begin the process of seeking pregnancy, start with Chapters 1 to 3, which provide an overview of the options, help with initial decision-making, and assist in preparing for conception and pregnancy. This is foundational and will support you as you dive into the specifics covered in Chapters 4 to 6, including donor selection, surrogacy, and insemination. For those conceiving via insemination, special attention is given to helping you feel confident about when you are ovulating, so you can get the timing right, which is covered in Chapter 6. If you plan to start inseminating within the next three to six months, don't wait to review this chapter. If you are considering IVF (in vitro fertilization) or reciprocal IVF (conceiving via IVF with your partner's egg), Chapter 1 addresses success rates and costs, while Chapter 8 will walk you through what to expect during treatment.

If you are pursuing a surrogate pregnancy, you will find information that applies to you throughout this book. Chapters 1 to 4 cover the preparatory stages, Chapter 5 is dedicated to surrogacy, and Chapters 8 to 11 walk you through the clinical details related to conception and early pregnancy, including information about how to cope emotionally in Chapter 9.

If you are already in the process of inseminating when you pick up this book, be sure to take a look at the success rates and recommended timelines in the second half of Chapter 1. This will provide guidance for deciding how long to try and when to seek additional support if needed. It will also put your efforts to conceive into perspective with your age, assisting you in big-picture thinking to support you in moving to the next level of care at the appropriate time, before your fertile time runs out. You might then skip to the list of checkpoints at the beginning of Chapter 7: Troubleshooting and Complicated Conceptions. You can use this list to guide where in the book you turn to next. If you find there is information on the checklist you have not yet considered, back up to the recommended chapter provided on the checklist.

If you are about to dive into the IVF process yourself, as a partner, as a surrogate, or as a parent-to-be via surrogacy, start with Chapter 8: In Vitro Fertilization and Embryo Transfer. This chapter is designed to demystify the IVF process and provide anticipatory guidance to help you stay grounded as you go through it. Be sure to also flip back to Chapter 2: Fertile Health for Every Body to make sure you are doing what you can to support your reproductive system and/or prepare your body for pregnancy.

If you have been diagnosed with PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome), fibroids, or endometriosis, Chapter 7: Troubleshooting and Complicated Conceptions is for you. A detailed exploration of the evidence for supporting these conditions is included here. This chapter, as well as the rest of the book, is written from a body-positive, anti-fat-shaming perspective. If you've simply been told you need to lose weight to conceive, you will find a more nuanced approach here.

If you are newly pregnant or your partner or surrogate is pregnant, turn directly to Chapter 11: Early Pregnancy and Lactation Induction. While this book is primarily focused on fertility and achieving pregnancy, this chapter is included for guidance in the early weeks after conception. Additionally, it contains information

that is hard to find elsewhere, including protocols for inducing lactation, which ideally start three to six months before your babe arrives. Guidance is provided for choosing a care provider, caring for your mental health, getting the support you need, and queering pregnancy. Considerations for bonding and attachment, feeding after chest masculinization surgery, and ensuring that your baby gets a good latch are included as well.

If you are a midwife or other health care provider who cares for conceiving queer and trans families, you will glean a great deal of information by witnessing the transmission of information provided for families in this book. There are notes for you at the end of each chapter to guide you in your practice. Consider this the preceptorship you never had.

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