



IP Guide to Gestational Surrogacy

Table Of Contents

- 01. Introduction
- 02. Research
- 02. Requirements
- 03. How To Talk To Your Family And Children
- 04. Risks And Things To Consider
- 06. Frequently Asked Questions
- 07. Matching
- 07. Surrogate Screening
- 09. Surrogacy Contracts
- 10. Medications And Procedures
- 11. Transfer
- 12. Reimbursements
- 15. Pregnancy And Birth

Introduction

Welcome to JA Surrogacy Consulting Canada. If you are reading this guide, it is because you have expressed interest in becoming an intended parent. We understand that this is a process most people know little about, so we created this guide to educate anyone interested in a surrogacy journey.

Surrogacy is empowering, selfless and an incredibly rewarding experience. It's also complicated and sometimes confusing. That is why, at JA Surrogacy Consulting Canada, we always remain accessible throughout every step of your journey; to support you in whatever way you, your family and your future surrogate may need. We encourage you to reach out at any time with questions or concerns you may have. No question is silly. We encourage building communities within our agency; to create friendships, to be resources for one another, to share our joys and sorrows, and ask questions. If you wish to be added to our online groups please let us know.

Congratulations on taking these first steps to building a family. We hope this guide will give you all the answers you are looking for.



Research

Surrogacy is becoming a more common way for people to build families who cannot carry children themselves. There are many Facebook groups, online forums, books, news articles, and people to reach out to that can be great resources for information.

Do some of your own investigating to find out whether or not this is the right path for you and your family. There are tons of answers and opinions right at your fingertips. Like everything else on the internet, be sure to check your facts and to not take any kind of medical advice. Everyone's journey is unique and the best people to give you specific advice will be the professionals directly working on your case. We believe you will find the surrogacy communities in Canada very welcoming and helpful.

Requirements

As an intended parent(s) you probably want to know what requirements our surrogates must meet. All our gestational carriers must meet the following criteria:

- Be between the ages of 21-49
- Have delivered one or more child(ren) of your own
- Have experienced healthy pregnancies and births
- Have had 6 or less vaginal births or 3 or less caesarean births
- Be a non-smoker, and have limited exposure to second hand smoke
- Be a non-drug user (this includes the use of medical cannabis)
- Be willing to undergo a medical and psychological assessment for both yourself and your partner
- BMI 45 and under

How To Talk To Your Family And Children About Surrogacy

If you have a **partner**, it is important that they are as informed about the process as you are. Intended parents are required to go through their own physical and psychological screening and legal contracts.

It is important to be open and honest with your **family**. Explain to them why you want use surrogacy to build your family. Just like with any pregnancy, there are associated risks. There is often a lot of worry around this from our families as they care about our emotional well-being and so little about surrogacy is known to the general population. Explaining to them your understanding of the surrogacy process will help them see that this isn't as scary as they may have thought. In many cases, surrogate families become very close with the intended parents' families as well. Everyone takes part in creating families through surrogacy.

You know your **child(ren)** best. Teaching them about surrogacy, and why it is so important, is going to look different for every family. You would be surprised how much children actually understand when you're just clear and honest with them. Tell them about why you want to partner with a surrogate, and tell them about your surrogate. We suggest an introductory video call if your children would like to meet your surrogate. Tell your child(ren) about why they are so important in your life and how you want to experience the joy of having more children, while giving them siblings.

Often children are very excited and proud, and want to share this with other people, sometimes with complete strangers. Ensure that when you share information with your child(ren), that you are clear about what you want shared with your community and what is private.

Children's literature can help explain the different ways that families are created. Here are a few books we recommend:

• The Kangaroo Pouch
By Sarah Philips Pellet

• Hope & Will Have a Baby
By Irene Celce

• The Tango Makes Three
By Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson

• What makes a baby
By Cory Silverberg



Risks And Things To Consider

We don't have to tell you that becoming an intended parent(s) is a huge responsibility and that there are many things to take into consideration. Your expectations and preferences are going to help us partner you with an appropriate surrogate who shares the same wants/needs and values. Having clear boundaries is what is going to make this a mutually respectful and beautiful relationship. Here are some of the most important aspects of your journey that you will need to consider and be in agreement with your gestational carrier:

- How many embryos are they willing to transfer?
- Are you and your surrogate willing to terminate or selectively reduce should more than one embryo begin to grow?
- Is your surrogate comfortable with you choosing termination if there is a medical issue with the fetus(es)?
- Is the surrogate comfortable with you attending the transfer and/or OB appointments?
- Is the surrogate willing to undergo an amniocentesis if the Doctor or you request for it?
- Is the surrogate comfortable with you being in the room during the birth? In the case of a C-section, the surrogate will choose who they want as their support person.
- After the birth, what kind of relationship would you like to have going forward with your surrogate and her family?

- It can sometimes take multiple transfers to achieve a pregnancy, how many transfer procedures would you be willing to undergo?
- Do you feel comfortable sharing personal information about yourself?
- Do you have time to provide updates to your surrogate and maintain a active communicative relationship?
- Are you able to attend ultrasounds, blood work and out of town Doctors' appointments?
- Do you have a solid support system for your journey? People that can help and understand.
- Pregnancies on occasion can end in a miscarriage or an ectopic pregnancy and in some cases may lead to a D&C. The journey can have challenges, its important to understand these and have resources available to you, should you need them.

Choosing surrogacy is a commitment and a time-consuming process. We understand that many of our intended parents have been on the journey to build a family for a long time. Some have come to us after failed attempts on their own fertility journeys, or after having other broken surrogacy matches outside our company. We want to assure you that we uphold high standards on the screening process of surrogates and we always do our best to find the best partnership possible for each intended family.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is our first step with this process?

A. When you are ready to begin you will be asked to complete the intended parent profile and we will set up your initial consultation with one of our intended parent support workers.

Surrogacy is becoming a more common way for people to build families who cannot carry children themselves. Do some of your own investigating to find out whether or not surrogacy is the right path for you and your family. There are many Facebook groups, online forums, books, news articles, and people to reach out to that can be great resources for information. Like everything else on the internet, be sure to check your facts and to not take any kind of medical advice. Everyone's journey is unique and the best people to give you specific advice will be the professionals directly working on your case. We believe you will find the surrogacy communities in Canada very welcoming and helpful.

Q. How much will it cost to have a child through surrogacy?

A. Surrogacy is an expensive process and intended parents should ensure they are financially prepared before beginning a surrogacy journey. Anyone looking to begin a surrogacy journey in Canada should be prepared to spend approximately \$80,000 - \$130,000 CAD.

There are many variables involved in determining the cost of a surrogacy journey such as; the location of the surrogate/intended parents, clinic choice, number of cycles/procedures and expenses claimed by the surrogate.

Q. How soon will I be matched?

A. Our Intake Coordinator will advise you of our current averages at the time of your intake call. We strive to have short lead times between registration and matching, which is why we ask that you are forthcoming about your preferences and criteria. Surrogates are often very accommodating, so the chances of finding someone who has the same preferences as you is quite high.

Q. Will our names be on the birth certificate?

A. Yes, with the assistance of your legal counsel, your names are legally on the baby's birth certificate. This process may differ based on which province your surrogate gives birth in so it is important to consult your legal counsel on any current provincial laws regarding parentage.



Matching

This is such an exciting part of the journey. Intended parents have been waiting for this moment for a long time. It's ok to feel nervous, just remember that the surrogate wants you to like them as much as you want them to like you. Just be yourself! We will be on the first few e-mails between you and the surrogate while you are breaking the ice. Ensure to communicate the best way to reach one another. The most common ways that people connect are via e-mail, Skype, WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger.

Surrogate Screening

Screening will often take place at the fertility clinic you as IPs have chosen. Some clinics are willing to send requisitions to the surrogate's doctor so that they can complete it locally. If your surrogate has a partner, some clinics will also require that they are screened through blood tests as well. There are two portions to the screening process:

Psychological Screening

This portion of the screening is performed by a Psychologist or Social Worker who specializes in working with gestational carriers and intended families. The screening ensures that the surrogate fully understands the emotional ramifications of surrogacy. Some fertility clinics require the surrogate's partner to complete this screening as well. A personality assessment may be administered at that time as well. The Psychologist or Social Worker will provide a written report and a recommendation regarding their ability to perform the duties of a surrogate. Most fertility clinics will allow the surrogate to schedule this screening via telephone or Skype. Once the report is complete, it will be sent to your nurse and they will notify us of the results.

Medical Screening

This portion of the screening is performed to ensure the surrogate is physically capable of undergoing the surrogacy process. They will be tested for sexually transmitted diseases, other various transmissible diseases, drugs, and will be required to provide vaginal cultures. The tests include an internal ultrasound, blood draws, and a physical with the fertility doctor. Some clinics require the surrogate's partner to do a medical screening as well, but they only require a blood draw from them.

Meeting with the Fertility Doctor

Once all the screening is completed the surrogate will then meet/skype with the fertility doctor. The doctor will explain how the IVF process works and what to expect. They will inform the surrogate about transfer, embryos, drugs, emotions etc. We remind surrogates to take this time to ask the fertility professionals any questions they may have about the medical aspects of fertility treatments.





Surrogacy Contracts

Once your surrogate has been medically cleared, you will be required to enter into a surrogacy agreement with your surrogate. This is a legally binding contract that will be created by a fertility lawyer. As intended parents, you will pay for your representation and we will connect the surrogate with someone who will be their personal lawyer. The IPs lawyer is called the, “drafting lawyer” and the gestational carrier’s lawyer is called the, “reviewing lawyer”. The agreement will cover issues such as reimbursements, legal obligations, conduct, relinquishment of the child, bed rest, etc.

Once you have had an opportunity to review the agreement, you will be asked to have a meeting with your lawyer (this is normally done by telephone due to the location of the lawyers that we work with) to discuss any changes. Your surrogate and their partner will also be required to review the agreement with their lawyer. The reviewing lawyer will relay any amendments to the drafting lawyer. Once all the terms are agreed upon by you and your surrogate, you will all be required to sign the agreement.

Your clinic will require legal clearance before starting medications. A letter will be sent to the fertility clinic by the drafting lawyer to notify them that you and the surrogate have received legal clearance and that the cycle can begin.



Medications And Procedures

Each fertility clinic is different and has its own protocols. Your surrogate will be required to follow a cycle calendar which has been created specifically for their transfer.

Estradiol/Delestrogen/Estrogen

This medication is used to thicken the endometrial lining to prepare for the implantation process. It is administered two to four times daily, approximately two weeks prior to the embryo transfer. It is then continued for approximately 10-12 weeks after the embryo transfer, depending on your fertility clinic's protocol. During the endometrial stimulation phase, the surrogate will be required to have blood tests and ultrasounds done as directed by the fertility clinic. The blood tests and ultrasounds will help the fertility clinic determine the thickness of the surrogate's endometrial lining.

Progesterone Injections

Once the endometrial lining is at the appropriate thickness, the surrogate will be required to start some form of Progesterone to assist with, and sustain, implantation and pregnancy. Progesterone is a hormone that women normally produce in their ovaries. In a surrogacy, however, the addition of supplemental Progesterone is essential to convince the body it is pregnant until the body produces this hormone on its own. The form of Progesterone may be in an oil-based, intramuscular injection, suppositories or nasal inhaler. This medication begins a few days prior to the embryo transfer and is continued for approximately 10-12 weeks after embryo transfer.



Transfer

Embryo transfers take approximately twenty minutes. The embryo transfer is performed with a very fine catheter that is inserted vaginally into the uterus through the cervix. This procedure is as invasive and “painful” as a PAP smear. Through ultrasound, you will be able to watch the moment your surrogate becomes pregnant (if you are present at the transfer). It is a magical moment in the journey. Your surrogate may be required to stay and rest at the fertility clinic for approximately twenty minutes to one hour following the transfer procedure. They may also be required to stay in a nearby hotel on bed rest for a period of time as specified by the fertility clinic. The bed rest time period is usually between 24-48 hours.

Following the embryo transfer your surrogate’s activity may be limited. These limitations will be determined by the fertility clinic.

A few days after the embryo transfer, your surrogate will go for their first “beta” blood tests to confirm pregnancy. The exact date will be determined by the fertility clinic. This date is dependent on how old the embryos were when they were transferred. If the pregnancy test is positive, your surrogate will be required to have an additional test two days later to ensure that the beta level doubles as this is an indication of a progressing, healthy pregnancy.

Your surrogate will continue to have ultrasounds done (based on the fertility clinics orders) until they are released from the fertility clinics care. At 6-12 weeks of pregnancy, your fertility clinic will discharge your surrogate and send all of their information to an OB/Midwife of the surrogate’s choosing. They will be the surrogate’s primary care provider until birth.

Reimbursements

The following is included on all legal referral forms which are sent to both the drafting lawyer and the reviewing lawyer. All expenses incurred by a surrogate pre-pregnancy, including, but not limited to, bloodwork, ultrasounds, childcare while at appointments and lost wages, shall be paid directly to the surrogate's clinic or reimbursed to the surrogate directly. Once the surrogate is pregnant, all prenatal medical appointments are anticipated to be covered by Provincial Medical Insurance. Here are a few examples of reimbursement expenses that you will find in your contract:

Basic Monthly Reimbursement Expense: (To be provided over a ten month period)	\$25,000-\$30,000 CAD
Transfer Expense:	\$500-\$1,000 per Transfer (plus Pre-Pregnancy Expenses as Incurred)
Maternity Clothing Expense:	\$750 (\$1,000 for Multiple Pregnancy)
Multiple Pregnancy Expense:	\$2,500
Abortion Expense:	Actual Expenses as Incurred
Reduction Expense:	Actual Expenses as Incurred
Invasive Procedure Expense: (DNC< Amnio, Cerclage, Saline U/S, C-Section)	Actual Expenses as Incurred except for C-Section Expenses in the Amount of \$2,500
Complications of Pregnancy or Delivery:	\$2,500
Bed Rest Expense: (On a Weekly Basis)	Actual Expenses as Incurred
Travel Expense:	Actual Expenses as Incurred
Lost Wage Expense – Surrogate Rate:	\$--- @ ---hrs/week
Lost Wage Expense – Spouse Rate:	Actual Expenses as Incurred
Health Insurance Expense:	Provincial
Life Insurance Policy Expense:	\$500,000.00 Minimum Coverage Premium varies on age and other factors



Reimbursement Requests

Pre-Pregnancy Reimbursement Receipts

Any costs your surrogate incurs prior to their initial travel instance (typically for screening) will be audited by your surrogate's support worker and submitted to the Travel Coordinator, who will include them alongside your surrogate's travel expenses. Please note that if your surrogate is local to your clinic or they complete screening locally to them and do not need to travel, the Travel Coordinator will still follow the same process to manage any expenses incurred at the time of the appointment. At the time of this initial travel instance, the Travel Coordinator will request that you fund the trust account with \$1,500 to cover any future pre-pregnancy expenses. Any pre-pregnancy expenses incurred after the initial travel instance will be audited by the Bookkeeper. The Bookkeeper will generate a report which your surrogate will forward to you with their request for reimbursement, and you will send approval to the Bookkeeper to release the funds from the trust account and issue them to your surrogate. Upon confirmation of pregnancy, any amount that remains in the trust account will be applied to pregnancy expenses. Reimbursable pre-pregnancy expenses typically include:

- Vitamins, medications
- Doctors note costs
- Costs for requisitioning birth records
- Passport expenses for surrogates matched at US clinics
- Childcare for appointments not related to travel or fertility clinic/satellite appointments
- Any other surrogacy specific costs as per your legal contract

Monthly Reimbursement Receipts

Your surrogate will begin to submit their expense reimbursements on a monthly basis following confirmation of pregnancy. In order for them to receive any reimbursements, there are a couple of steps that need to be taken to ensure that your surrogate and you are abiding by applicable Canadian laws surrounding surrogacy.

Step 1: Record Eligible Expenses as Outlined in the Contract

Your surrogate will start recording surrogacy related receipts as outlined in your contract. In the pre-contract stage, your surrogate will discuss with their support worker what expenses are in line with the regulations. These receipts can include the following: Phone bills, both land-line and cell, gym membership, life insurance, food, both groceries and meals eaten out, clothing, internet, child care and mileage. However, these categories will be further defined in your contract.

Prior to medical screening these receipts will be audited by their support worker (unless related to fertility clinic appointments), after medical screening they will be audited by the Bookkeeper, who will audit them as per AHRA and your contract, if applicable. Our Bookkeeper will then generate a report for your surrogate to forward to you along with a formal reimbursement request as per your contract.

Step 2: Send an Email Request

Your surrogate will forward a report to you and CC the Bookkeeper with the following email:

“Can you please reimburse me for \$_____ (your agreed upon monthly reimbursement amount) for expenses as per our agreement. Please see the attached breakdown
Thank you”

This request could also include any amount of additional expenses (maternity clothes, invasive procedure) your surrogate may have incurred during this period. You will then forward the funds to JA Surrogacy or give permission for the funds to be drawn from the trust account.

Pregnancy And Birth

We always instruct the surrogate to call their OB/Midwife in case of any leaking, bleeding, pains, nausea etc. Your surrogate will be expected to treat the pregnancy as if it were their own. We stress the importance of following all of the OB/Midwife's instructions.

During the pregnancy, your surrogate will continue to stay in contact with you. The goal is to organically build your relationship and base your communication upon the needs of everyone in the partnership. Surrogates are generally very excited to share milestones of your baby with you! The amount of contact between you and your surrogate is determined by the comfort level of you, your partner, and your surrogate. Just be honest about your needs, but also remember that they are holding your baby (potentially) very far away. Prompt communication (within 24 hours) will help alleviate anxiety for them and build the bond of trust.

Intended parent(s) should make every effort to be present at the birth of their child (c-section births are often limited in the number of people allowed in the operating room). Usually IP's plan to be close by during the last days of pregnancy. You are responsible for the care of your baby immediately upon the baby's birth. Typically, many gestational carriers and IP's are together with the baby for the majority of time before being released from the hospital. Your surrogate and their partner and children can share this special time. How your relationship with your surrogate will continue is up to all of you. Typically, there are many updates, pictures and visits following the birth of the baby. Although saying goodbye can be hard after becoming a part of each other's families, remember that it's not so much goodbye, but, "see you later". A few days after the birth, your surrogate will be expected to sign off their right of parentage and you become the legal parents of the baby. This is the last big step that everyone takes, thus concluding the surrogacy journey.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this guide. We hope that it gives clarification on the process so that you can feel fully informed and confident about your decisions and boundaries. If you are ever unsure or have any questions we are just a phone call away. Please don't hesitate to reach out for anything you need.

Welcome to our village