



National Committee for
a Human Life Amendment
HumanLifeAction.org

Key Points Regarding In Vitro Fertilization and Surrogacy

Core ethical problem. The National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) points out that "the heart of the IVF process itself, the practice of joining sperm and egg together in the fertility clinic, remains an intrinsic evil, flowing from the decision to allow our offspring to be 'manufactured.'"¹

Multiple Concerns with IVF Process

- **Eugenics.** *In vitro* fertilization (IVF) is the process in which a woman's eggs are fertilized with sperm in a lab. Multiple embryos are created, which are then prescreened for chromosomal abnormalities, genetic disorders, or in some cases, to determine the sex of the embryo for sex selection. At some clinics, clients are even offered the ability to screen for predicted intelligence or cosmetic traits, such as eye color.²
- **Embryos are treated as medical waste.** The "best" embryo(s) are transferred to the woman, with the remaining embryos being discarded (as medical waste), frozen, or donated.
- **Selective abortion of additional fetuses.** If more than one embryo successfully implants in the woman, then the additional fetuses are often killed ("selective reduction").³ Although it is recommended that the number of embryos transferred be limited, selective reduction still occurs, especially to reduce twins to a single pregnancy.
- **Frozen embryos.** There are over 1 million frozen human embryos in the United States,⁴ the existence of which pose many ethical issues: What happens when the couple who froze the embryos can no longer be contacted? Who determines what happens to a frozen embryo if the couple separates?
- **IVF-created embryos used for experimentation.** In 2017, it was announced that human embryos were specifically created through IVF for experimental gene-editing to fix a disease-causing gene found in some of the embryos. NCBC's Father Tad Pacholczyk explained that these "very young humans . . . were created in laboratory glassware, experimented upon, their genes were tinkered with and they were killed and dispatched as research fodder into biohazard waste containers."⁵

Moreover, "surplus" embryos from IVF treatments are used for embryonic stem cell experimentation, whereby the embryos are killed during the process.

- **IVF's Societal impact.** With the clinical creation of human embryos, their screening for imperfections, their disposal as medical waste, their "selective reduction," and their use as research material, children and human life will increasingly be viewed as a commodity that is expendable.
- **Summary of IVF concerns.** Father Tad Pacholczyk with the NCBC summarizes the grave harms of IVF: "IVF turns procreation into 'production.' It dehumanizes embryonic children, treating them as objects to be frozen, manipulated, abandoned or destroyed. Since the practice began in 1978, millions of embryos have become warehoused in liquid nitrogen, abandoned in frozen 'orphanages.' Millions more have been outright discarded as biomedical waste. Instead of 'loving our children into being' through the one-flesh union of husband and wife, IVF mass-produces children in clinics, assembly-line style, under the impetus of market capitalism. Children born by IVF, moreover, experience roughly double the rate of birth defects of regularly conceived children."
- For a discussion of the health risks to women, the health of children conceived through IVF, "mix-ups" between families, and other IVF harms, see the USCCB's "In Vitro Fertilization: The Human Cost."⁶

Multiple Concerns with Surrogacy.

- **Biological Origins.** A surrogate is a woman who carries a child in her womb for someone else (either a couple or a single person). The child may be genetically related to both members of the couple, one member of the couple, or neither of them.
- **Exploits financially challenged women.** Despite the risks to their health, vulnerable low-income women, often overseas in developing countries, may not be able to resist the promise of tens of thousands of dollars in exchange for "renting" their wombs to carry another person's baby.⁷ Likewise, women are exploited when they are paid to harvest their eggs.
- **Pressure to abort.** Contracting couples may pressure the surrogate woman to abort the child if a disability is discovered, or to abort if a multiple pregnancy occurs.⁸
- **Trafficking of children.** Surrogacy is often likened to a form of "trafficking" of children, whereby children are treated as commodities in commercial transactions, often across international borders.⁹
- **Health risks to women.** Women who carry a child conceived with someone else's egg face a three-fold risk of developing pre-eclampsia or hypertension. Women who are egg donors have experienced cancer, loss of fertility, kidney disease, and other health risks.¹⁰

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¹ National Catholic Bioethics Center, It's Not Just About the Frozen Embryos (March 30, 2019) at <https://www.ncbcenter.org/making-sense-of-bioethics-cms/column-165-its-not-just-about-the-frozen-embryos>.

² Brown, P, Big Tech Meets Big Fertility, Public Discourse (Feb. 11, 2026) at <https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2026/02/100170/>.

³ National Catholic Bioethics Center, The Expendable Children (Aug. 30, 2017) at

<https://www.ncbcenter.org/making-sense-of-bioethics-cms/column-146-the-expendable-children>.

⁴ Christianson, M, Embryo cryopreservation and utilization in the United States from 2004-2013 F.S. Rep 2020; 1(2):71-7.

⁵ National Catholic Bioethics Center, The Expendable Children (Aug. 30, 2017) at

<https://www.ncbcenter.org/making-sense-of-bioethics-cms/column-146-the-expendable-children>.

See also National Catholic Bioethics Center, Gene-Edited Babies and the Runaway Train of IVF (Dec. 30, 2018) at <https://www.ncbcenter.org/making-sense-of-bioethics-cms/column-162-gene-edited-babies-and-the-runaway-train-of-ivf>.

⁶ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, In Vitro Fertilization: The Human Cost (updated March 2025) at

https://www.usccb.org/resources/IVF_Human_Cost_2025_0.pdf. *See also* USCCB, A Catholic Primer on In Vitro Fertilization (2025) at <https://www.respectlife.org/articles>.

⁷ In February 2026, two U.S. senators called for a federal investigation of a massive surrogacy operation. In their [letter](#) to the U.S. Department of Justice, Senators Cotton and Scott wrote: "Recent reports have uncovered more than 107 Chinese-owned surrogacy agencies operating in Southern California alone. These agencies cater almost exclusively to wealthy Chinese clients, and some are affiliated with Chinese state-owned entities. Chinese nationals pay women living in the United States more than \$50,000 to serve as surrogates. The children are born on United States soil and granted automatic citizenship. And in most cases, the infants are promptly flown to China and raised there under the direct influence of the Chinese Communist Party."

⁸ National Catholic Bioethics Center, The Multiple Moral Problems of Surrogacy (Oct. 30, 2016) at

<https://www.ncbcenter.org/making-sense-of-bioethics-cms/column-136-the-multiple-moral-problems-of-surrogacy>.

⁹ National Catholic Bioethics Center, Surrogacy and Child Trafficking (Feb. 29, 2024) at

<https://www.ncbcenter.org/making-sense-of-bioethics-cms/column-195-sexual-atoms-and-molecules-ktn7-7asje-dss3w-5ewac>.

¹⁰ The Heritage Foundation, How Surrogacy Harms Women and Children (May 5, 2021) at

<https://www.heritage.org/marriage-and-family/commentary/how-surrogacy-harms-women-and-children>. *See also*

The Center for Bioethics and Culture Network, Three Things You Should Know About Third Party Assisted

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