

Our sperm-donor laws need update

Monique Shebbeare was 37 and single when she decided she was ready to have a baby. The first step on her reproductive to do list? Researching sperm donors.

"At first I thought, 'Wouldn't it be nice if I could go with someone I knew so my child could have a relationship with that person?'" she recalls. But the Vancouver estate and family lawyer, who now specializes in reproductive law, quickly eliminated that option as too risky: A known donor cannot waive parental rights until after the birth.

"If you're a person who likes certainty, an anonymous donor is the way to go," says Shebbeare. If you go this route, you won't have to worry about custody and access challenges from the donor.

The only downside is that your child won't know who their father is — unless you opt for a special class of anonymous donor known as an identity-disclosure donor. These donors are open to being contacted by any offspring who are conceived once those offspring reach age 18.

Shebbeare opted for an identity-disclosure donor when she decided to start her family. She has some information about him that she can share with her daughter, now two, at the appropriate time. "We have some background about his medical history and two photographs," says Shebbeare.

When her daughter reaches age 18, she will have the option of trying to make contact with the donor, if she wishes. To make such future reunions possible, identity-disclosure donors agree to provide the donor registry with their name and their address at the time of the donation. An adoptee herself, Shebbeare feels that it is important to leave the door open for contact between sperm donors and their offspring. "I know from personal experience that obtaining information about one's biological origins and the possibility of knowing one's biological parents goes a long way to completing one's sense of identity and place in the world," she explains in a post on the bcheritagelaw.com blog. "No matter how



ANN DOUGLAS

close one is to the family they grew up with, there can be great satisfaction in seeing one's physical characteristics . . . reflected in others (something most people talk a lot about and take for granted)."

Shebbeare would like to see the principles that govern open adoption legislation extended to the area of assisted reproduction.

This would allow children conceived through the use of donor sperm and donor eggs to make contact with their biological parents — and not just when they hit 18. This past spring, a B.C. court took a step in that direction, declaring provincial legislation that protects the identity of sperm donors unconstitutional. It ordered the province to draw up new legislation that will provide children of sperm donors with the same rights to information about their biological parents that adopted children have.

Families who have conceived with the help of donor sperm and donor eggs haven't been waiting for legislation to catch up with the realities of their lives, however. Many have gone online to donorsiblingregistry.com to connect with one another and to advocate for present and future donor families.

A particularly pressing issue? There's a shortage of sperm donors (particularly here in Canada, where it has been illegal to pay for egg or sperm donations since 2004). That has led to an overuse of the same pool of U.S.-based donors, with some individual donors fathering as many as 1,000 offspring. That raises the possibility that offspring from the same donor could meet and fall in love. "What's your egg or sperm donor ID number?" may become the



Monique Shebbeare and her daughter, Maya, who was conceived with the help of a sperm donor.

dating pickup line of the future.

It doesn't have to be that complicated, however, Shebbeare insists — not if the law catches up with the reproductive realities of a growing number of Canadian families. (The clientele of sperm banks is made up of single moms, same-sex cou-

ples, and heterosexual couples facing reproductive challenges.)

Families need certain protections under the law (from sperm banks putting profits before the best interests of children, for example). And children conceived through assisted reproduction want and

deserve the same rights and protections as children who are adopted. It's pretty simple, actually.

Ann Douglas is the author of *The Mother of All Pregnancy Books* (2nd edition, Wiley, 2011) and numerous other books about pregnancy and parenting. Her website is www.having-a-baby.com.

Tough part's before the colonoscopy

THE YOU DOCS
DR. MIKE ROIZEN
AND DR. MEHMET OZ

Everyone out there who watched one of us (Dr. Oz) prepare for his colonoscopy on TV, kvetching all the way, knows the colonoscopy isn't the tough part. That happens the day before. First, you can have only clear liquids and Jell-O, which can make you cranky and light-headed (well, that and the nervous anticipation). Second, you have to chug quarts of what humorist Dave Barry called a nuclear laxative. ("You eliminate everything. Then you start eliminating food you haven't eaten yet.")

He's right. So what good news could there be about this doozy of a process? The clear-liquids-only thing may be history.

Okay, you can't dive into a bowl of chicken, tomatoes and whole-wheat pasta in walnut pesto sauce the night before (have it the night after). But how about oatmeal, juice and coffee for breakfast; pureed carrot soup, custard and soda for lunch; a milkshake that afternoon; Greek yogurt swirled into tomato soup, eggnog and cocoa that night? Not *Iron Chef*, but better.

What difference did diet make? Zip. The docs' ability to spot polyps was the same. The average colonoscopy time was the same: 27 minutes.

And here's the thing: If you've got



You Docs say you no longer just have to eat only clear liquids and Jell-O before your colonoscopy.

diabetes, eating more normally could help keep your blood sugar steady. Talk to your doc. This isn't a done deal, but it also isn't the first study to find this.

As for the nuclear laxative, no change. But we lived. So did Dave Barry. You will, too. And it's way preferable to dying from colon cancer. Sign up now, and get 'er done!

KICK DIABETES TO THE CURB

As Type 2 diabetes continues to spread faster than jokes about Gov. Rick Perry's memory, we You Docs have one comment, and it's no joke: Fight, fight, fight diabetes.

If you've got it, reverse it. Type 2 is

a disease you almost always can kick to the curb. If you've got pre-diabetes, treat it like a bulldog teaching a new chew toy who's boss would. If you think you're headed for the big D (find out, below), make a You-turn now. The No. 1 key: Lose even some weight by avoiding added sugars, simple carbs, saturated fats. You can do it.

What's got us yelling "Fight!" is news that diabetes doesn't just do in your body (eyes, heart, kidneys). It also attacks your brain. It restricts circulation and creates so much damaging inflammation that the brain shrinks 15 per cent. The most affected areas? Your ability to talk, make decisions, handle tasks and remember what you just said.

How to know if you're speeding down the Type 2 diabetes highway at 80 mph? Answer three questions:

1. Does type 2 diabetes run in your family?

2. Are you 55 or older?

3. Are you clinically obese? Meaning, is your body mass index above 30? If you don't know, use the BMI calculator at www.RealAge.com or do this: Measure your waist at belly-button level, sucking in. If your waist measurement is more than half your height, you're at risk.

If you answered yes to all three, odds are 1 in 5 that you'll have diabetes within five years unless you do you-know-what: Fight, fight, fight.

YouDocs Mehmet Oz and Mike Roizen are authors of *YOU: Losing Weight*. Order it at StarStore.ca. Submit questions and find more info at RealAge.com

Price trumps quantity, study claims

FOOD PRICES from E1

"In these challenging economic times, rather than pass the costs on to our consumers, the decision was made to adjust the package size of our frozen concentrate," said Shannon Denny, a spokesperson for Coca-Cola, manufacturer of Minute Maid juice.

But most customers don't realize they're actually paying more for less. One stay-at-home mom of three kids aged 2, 4 and 6, says she finds it hard to predict her grocery bill, but knows it has grown to at least \$200 a week.

"It seems like every time I go it's more expensive, something else has increased. But it's hard to nail down the specifics," says Claire Fletcher, 31.

"You don't notice the sizes going down," she says, adding she now hunts for sales. "But with three kids, I run out of stuff all the time," she says. When she shops, she looks at price first, size second.

Studies show that consumers are twice as sensitive to price as quantity, meaning you're more likely to notice your morning coffee went up in price than down in size. That's why, after a bad growing season in



Concentrated orange juice has recently been "downsized."

2009, a price increase of 20 cents per litre could be off-loaded onto consumers when a carton of Tropicana dropped to 1.75 litres, down from 1.89 litres. The price at the Loblaws checkout remained \$4.99.

Consumer advocate Ken Whitehurst recommends shoppers take a calculator to the grocery store to help figure out the accurate unit price.

Dilip Soman, marketing and communications professor at the Rotman School of Management, teaches his students about the ethics of downsizing. "Why do they do it? Because they can get away with it. Should they do it? No. I never recommend it. I think it's dishonest," Soman says. He says companies take advantage of strapped-for-time, stressed-out customers.

Fuel and transport costs have been blamed for the rising cost of consumer goods, along with international demand for ethanol, which continues to push up the price of cereal grains. The latest Statistics Canada numbers show food, a major contributor to inflation, cost 4.3 per cent more than it did last year.

Interested in Managing your Diabetes Naturally?

JOIN A LANDMARK STUDY TO MANAGE YOUR DIABETES THROUGH HEALTHY DIET AND LIFESTYLE CHOICES.

By participating, you will get:

- advice from a registered dietitian
- advanced check up of your arteries
- additional education in using low glycemic and high fibre diets

Call St. Michael's Hospital today at 416.867.7474
www.stmichaelshospital.com



You may qualify if you are:

- living or working in the Toronto area
- in good health
- taking tablets for diabetes (but not insulin)

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO FACULTY OF MEDICINE
CIHR IRSC
St. Michael's
Inspired Care.
Inspiring Science.

ROLEX • PATEK • CARTIER
GOLD • SILVER
DIAMONDS
BUY • SELL • TRADE
VAN RIJK 416-440-0123 www.vanrijk.com

UP TO
1/2 PRICE WINE SALE
Every Vintage - Even Award Winners & New Releases
Stock up for the Holidays
VQA WINES FROM \$6.47
We'll Even Deliver Direct to Your Door
Visit www.rockwayglen.com
or Taste & Shop 3290 Ninth Street, St. Catharines
(Between Jordan & St. Catharines)
WINE STORE • 905 641-5771
WINES@ROCKWAYGLEN.COM
ROCKWAY GLEN GOLF COURSE & ESTATE WINERY
3290 Ninth Street, St. Catharines (Between St. Catharines & Jordan)