

Sacred Heart *Guardians and Shelter*

Serving the Smallest

Our mission is to provide care for the youngest and smallest members of our human family.

SHG provides burial for embryos who die prior to uterine transfer:

- Self-arrest after fertilization
- Fertilized but not selected for transfer or freeze
- Did not survive freeze or thaw process
- Cryostorage malfunction
- Patient-elected thaw and discard

Embryo remains burial takes place once per quarter at a Catholic cemetery (St. Paul, MN).

- *No patient-identifying information is required*
- *Communication to patients is voluntary*
- *Patients are not required to attend the service*
- *There is no cost to clinics, facilities or patients*



Sacred Heart Guardians and Shelter
3432 Denmark Ave. #253
Eagan, MN 55123

Sperm



Egg



Embryo*



*aka fertilized egg, 2PN, zygote, morula, blastocyst

Life expectancy	≤ 5 days	12-24 hours	1-6 days <i>in vitro</i> + 38 weeks <i>in utero</i> + 76.1 years (man), 81.1 years (woman)
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes ½ of chromosomes to new embryo • Determines sex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes ½ of chromosomes to new embryo • Protects embryo prior to implantation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To love and be loved • To live eternally with God
If it dies in a lab, should it be buried?	No	No	<i>Yes</i>
Why?	It's a human cell	It's a human cell	<i>It's a human being</i>

Example. Cause of embryo death is self-arrest in culture. Fertilization report: 10 oocytes retrieved, 8 fertilized, 5 are "viable." 2 will be transferred and 3 will be cryopreserved.



SHG would bury 3 embryos
(i.e., the 3 that fertilized but were not counted as viable)

“Most especially must I tread with care in matters of life and death.”

Modern Oath of Physicians (1964, Louis Lasagna, Academic Dean of the School of Medicine at Tufts University)

Dear Doctor,

When you received your white coat, you likely swore an oath pledging to maintain the utmost respect for human life. I'm asking you to consider that oath in light of the current practice of embryonic remains and medical waste disposal.

When you perform IVF, you don't treat just one adult patient. At the end of the fertilization period, one or several new human beings have also come into your care. Sadly, some of these tiny beings are with us for only a short while. You took great responsibility bringing them into the world, and now you have great responsibility in determining how they are honored on the way out.

Please let Sacred Heart Guardians and Shelter (SHG) facilitate burial for the lives that came into being in your presence. These humans are as deserving of honor and respect as any other of our kind. Let's meet to discuss how we can do this together.

God bless you,

Laura Elm
President and Executive Director

Option*	Description	Clinic Benefits	Scale of Impact for Embryos
Patient Opt-In	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clinic provides choice (e.g., Informed Consent). Ex:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ SHG-facilitated burial○ Patient-managed disposition○ Medical waste by clinic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increases transparency• Honors patients' beliefs and choice• Maintains clinic neutrality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some are buried
Patient Opt-Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clinic states (e.g., Informed Consent) that standard practice is burial via SHG. Patients may opt-out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increases transparency• Honors patients' beliefs and choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most are buried
Bury All	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SHG facilitates burial for all embryos who pass away in clinic or lab.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No change to current communication process; discussion with patients on an as needed basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All are buried

**At this time, SHG does not outreach to patients or the general public. We do consider such outreach as a potential future avenue to increase awareness of this service.*



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