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Egg Donation as Income?

CHICAGO, Ill. (Ivanhoe Newswire) -- The bad economy is forcing some women to eye their eggs as a source of income. There's been a surge of donors because they can earn thousands of dollars within a few months. However, doctors urge women to weigh the risks before signing up.



Melissa is a mom on a budget. Trying to stretch every penny to keep her family comfortable. "Since the economy isn't very strong you don't know what tomorrow's going to bring," Melissa told Ivanhoe.

When the stay-at-home mom needed a new source of income she realized she had a commodity in high demand -- her eggs. "You see an ad that says you can get paid for something that you have. Who wouldn't think about it?" Melissa said.

Melissa gets about \$7,000 each time she donates. This is her fifth round. In all, she's taken home close to \$35,000.

"For me it felt great to actually help my family in some way. You can also give somebody what they desire. Why not do it?" Melissa said.

Several egg donation agencies across the country report a 30 to 40 percent increase in the number of women applying to be donors in the past year.



"With the times being tough with people being out of jobs with threat of job loss I think more and more women are seeing this as a viable option," Eve Feinberg, M.D., Reproductive Endocrinologist in Chicago, Ill, said.

"I'd ask her to think about what's the value of this money that she's getting does she generally understand the risks that she's taking," David Cohen, M.D., Reproductive Endocrinologist at the University of Chicago, said.

Donating eggs isn't easy. It involves three months of medical and psychological screenings, blood tests, and powerful fertility drugs that have side effects. Women need several days to recover after the eggs are harvested. There's also an emotional toll.



"How am I going to feel about it emotionally about this question of having my genetic material passed on in a child out there? I want somebody to sit and think about it," Dr. Cohen said.

Melissa says the process was tough, but she's now using the money to save for her kids education. "What you're getting and what you're giving is completely worth it," said Melissa.

Giving someone else the chance of having a family while helping her own get through tough times.