

UK panel supports first genetically modified human embryos

A British expert scientific panel gave its backing on Tuesday to potential new 3-way fertility treatments that would for the first time allow genetically modified embryos to be implanted into women.

The “three-parent” IVF techniques are designed to help families with particular genetic faults who want to avoid passing on incurable diseases to their children. They could be available for patients in two years, the scientists told reporters at a briefing in London.

Known as mitochondrial replacement or transfer, the methods are at the research stage in laboratories in Britain and the United States and have never yet been carried out in people anywhere in the world.

They are illegal in Britain for now, but the government said last year it was drawing up draft legislation which if passed into law would allow the treatments to go ahead if they proved safe and effective in clinical trials.

In the United States, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has also convened an expert committee to decide whether safety concerns raised by three-parent IVF are minimal enough to allow clinical trials in humans to begin.

Read the full, original story: UK scientific panel backs potential ‘three-parent’ IVF babies