Scientists are getting closer to the possibility of making a new person from skin or blood cells – without the need for sex.

This approach goes well beyond in vitro fertilization, which combines egg and sperm in a laboratory, because it doesn’t require natural eggs or sperm.

Called in vitro gametogenesis, or IVG, it promises to someday provide a cure for many types of infertility, to slow or even turn off biological clocks, and to enable the kind of embryo selection that sends chills up many spines.

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The technology for making babies from cells other than eggs and sperm still remains a decade away or more.

But now – before the science turns possibility into reality – is a good time for the public to consider the implications of IVG, said I. Glenn Cohen, an expert on the intersection of law and bioethics at Harvard Law School.

“There’s certainly a lot of publications and a lot of interest in the scientific community, and it’s great that we’re introducing it to a larger community,” Cohen said after the first day’s presentations. “If people have serious ethical concerns, this is the time to spell them out.”

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