

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT CORD BLOOD BANKING AND DONATION

This brochure is designed to provide basic information about cord blood banking and donation. Public cord blood banks are regulated by the federal government, and there are some restrictions that impact donation. Cord blood banks should be contacted for more specific information on the process for donation and storage.

1. What is cord blood?

Umbilical **cord blood** or cord blood is the blood that stays in the umbilical cord and placenta after the birth of an infant. This blood contains stem cells that are special cells that can help treat diseases in children and adults.

In the past, all cord blood was thrown away after the infant was delivered. Cord blood can now be donated or saved in cord blood banks for future use.

2. How is cord blood used?

Stem cells from cord blood can be used to treat over 70 diseases in children and adults. The stem cells in the blood help to build new healthy cells and replace cells that have been damaged. Cord blood has been used to treat certain cancers, inherited diseases and diseases of the immune system. Scientists are also studying whether cord blood can be used to treat other common diseases like heart disease, stroke, and brain diseases.

3. Who can benefit from the stem cells in cord blood?

Cord blood transplants can benefit immediate family members, extended family members, and non-related children and adults with certain diseases. One of the benefits of cord blood is that an exact match to the person receiving the cord blood is not required. Cord blood may be able to help people who are waiting for life-saving treatments. According to the Institute of Medicine, transplants of cord blood cells have already saved the lives of tens of thousands of Americans with a variety of diseases.

4. How is cord blood collected?

After the infant is born, medical staff collects the cord blood and places it in a special container that is then sent to the cord blood bank. The cord blood and mother's blood samples are then processed and tested. If the mother's blood sample identifies the presence of infectious disease, the mother will be notified. Once the cord blood bank determines the blood can be used, it is stored for future use.

5. What are the risks with cord blood collection?

There are no risks to the mother or infant when cord blood is collected. It is collected from the umbilical cord after the infant is born. Collecting the blood will not affect delivery or cause pain to the mother or infant.

6. Are stem cells in cord blood different from embryonic stem cells?

Yes, stem cells from cord blood are different from embryonic stem cells. **Embryonic stem**

cells come from developing human or animal embryos. Cord blood stem cells do not involve the use of embryos.

7. Is there a demand for cord blood?

Yes, thousands of patients who might benefit from a cord blood transplant die every year waiting for treatment. There is an especially great need for more cord blood donations from ethnic and racial minorities. Tissue types among ethnic and racial minorities can vary; therefore, it is desirable to have a larger "pool" of donated stem cells to meet the needs of these populations.

8. What options are available for cord blood to be donated or saved?

Cord blood is collected at the hospital shortly after delivery. There are several options if families want to donate or save infant cord blood:

- ◆ donate it to a public bank, where it is made available to others, much like blood banks;
- ◆ save it through a family or sibling directed banking program so it will be available for family members, for a fee; or
- ◆ save it to a private bank so it will be available for family members, for a fee.

Families can call their local hospital or health care provider to find out which options are available, or they may contact the resources provided on the back of this brochure for a list of public and private cord blood banks. Families that decide to donate or save cord blood should make plans with a cord blood bank and their doctor before their infant's delivery.

9. Is there a cost to donate or save cord blood?

There is no cost to donate infant cord blood to a public cord blood bank. There may be costs associated with family or sibling directed donor programs, if the unit stored is reserved for a family. Some parents choose to save or “bank” cord blood in a private cord blood bank so family members can use the blood if it is ever needed. If parents choose to store their infant’s cord blood, private banks charge a collection fee that ranges from \$900 to \$2000 and an annual storage fee of approximately \$90 to \$150. These fees may vary between private banks.

10. How do families decide if they want to save or donate cord blood?

The decision to donate or save cord blood is a choice that only expectant parents can make. It is important for expectant parents to talk to their health care provider so that they have all the information they need to make the decision that is right for their family.

Families do not have to donate or save infant cord blood.



For more information on cord blood banking and donation, you may contact the following resources:

National Marrow Donor Program-Provides a list of hospitals that accept cord blood donations.

Phone: 1-800-627-7692

Web Address: www.marrow.org

Parent’s Guide to Cord Blood Banks-Provides information for parents on cord blood banking, and a list of private and public cord blood banks.

Web Address:

www.ParentsGuideCordBlood.com

South Texas Blood & Tissue Center-Provides information on the process and benefits of cord blood banking and donation.

Phone: 1-800-292-5534

Web Address:

www.bloodntissue.org/texascordbloodbank.asp

You may view or download this brochure online at:

Texas Department of State Health Services

www.dshs.state.tx.us/mch/default.shtm#whatsnew

For ordering information, go to:

www.dshs.state.tx.us

Or call

(512) 458-7111 x 7761



INFORMATION ON UMBILICAL CORD BLOOD BANKING AND DONATION

