

UMBILICAL CORD BLOOD BANKING

What is cord blood?

Umbilical cord blood is blood in the placenta that is traditionally discarded after delivery. It is rich in stem cells, which are the cells that divide to make new blood and immune cells.

Why cord blood?

Cord blood offers an alternative to bone marrow transplantation for a variety of hematological, immune and genetic disorders. Cord blood is easier to collect than bone marrow and does not involve a painful procedure. There is much less chance of rejection and graft-versus-host disease. Cord blood is also useful for ethnic minorities, who are typically underrepresented in bone marrow registries.

Who can cord blood help?

Private cord blood banking is for expectant parents with a family history of certain genetic disorders (severe anemia, immune disorders, and some cancers); families who a child or other family member in need of a bone marrow transplant; and families looking for extra “insurance” for the health of their child by investing in the long term potential of stem cells.

What are the chances of needing the cord blood?

The odds of the child needing the cord blood prior to the age of 21 with the current uses are approximately 1:2,700, and the odds a family member will need it is about 1:1,400. These numbers may change as more uses become possible.

For how long can the cord blood be stored?

It is expected that the cord blood can be stored and used indefinitely, like bone marrow. Stem cells frozen over a decade have been used successfully in transplants.

What are other considerations?

Cord blood is checked for maternal, cell and bacterial contamination. The mother is screened for infectious diseases, including hepatitis B and C, HIV, HTLV, and syphilis. Accreditation by the American Association of Blood Banks (AABB) is helpful, as to whether the company has had successful transplants.

What is the cost?

Initial fees are around \$1,000 to \$2,000, but can be much lower for companies that offer fewer conveniences in the collection procedure. Yearly storage fees are about \$100. Several companies provide kits for public donation at no cost to you.

We will charge you \$200 to collect the cord blood. Please verify coverage of benefits with your insurance company. This may not be a covered service.

Visit www.cordbloodoptions.org for more information.