

What are the Costs?

By Maryland law, a mother who donates her baby's cord blood for public use, may not be charged any fees for collecting, transporting, or storing cord blood. However, there are fees for private cord blood banking. Costs vary by private cord blood bank. Private cord blood banks may charge for collection, transportation and yearly storage.

What are the Benefits of Cord Blood Donation?

Donation to a public cord blood bank may help others. Your baby's cord blood may be used to provide a stem cell transplant for someone with cancer or another serious medical problem. Also, some donated cord blood is used in research to study stem cell transplants. Through research, more patients can be helped in the future.

Currently, there are no public cord blood banks in Maryland. However, there may be public cord blood banks in other states that can help. Some public cord blood banks may be able to accept donations from Maryland residents. This may depend on where you live.

The National Marrow Donor Program can help Maryland residents with questions about donation to public cord blood banks in other states. The web site and telephone number are included on the back of this brochure.



For More Information:

Please visit the following resources to learn more about uses for umbilical cord blood and cord blood storage options.

Health Resources and Services Administration: provides information about cord banks, uses for cord blood, donation and other options for umbilical cord blood storage.

<http://bloodcell.transplant.hrsa.gov>

National Marrow Donor Program: provides information on public and private cord blood banking options.

<http://www.marrow.org/cord>

Toll Free: 1 (800) 627 - 7692

Parent's Guide to Cord Blood Foundation: provides information for parents on cord blood banking and a list of public and private banks.

<http://www.parentsquidecordblood.org>

This brochure is available online at:

<http://www.fha.state.md.us/mch/publications.cfm>

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Family Health Administration
Center for Maternal and Child Health

201 West Preston Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Phone: 410-767-6713

Toll Free: 1-977-4MD-DHMH (463-3464)

TTY Number: 1-800-735-2258

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Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Family Health Administration Center for Maternal and Child Health



Umbilical Cord Blood

Information for Parents-to-Be



Martin O'Malley, Governor
Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor
Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

Questions and Answers About Umbilical Cord Blood

What is Cord Blood?



Umbilical cord blood or “cord blood” is the blood left in the umbilical cord and placenta after a baby is born. This blood is usually thrown away. It can be saved and stored in a cord blood bank for use in the future. Cord blood contains stem cells.

Stem cells are special cells that can be used to treat certain diseases in children and adults. These diseases include some cancers (leukemia and lymphoma), blood disorders (sickle cell and thalassemia major), and other life-threatening diseases. When stem cells are used to treat a disease, it is called a stem cell transplant.

How is Cord Blood Collected?

Cord blood is collected after the baby is born and the umbilical cord has been clamped and cut. There are no risks to the baby or mother. At times, however, it may not be possible to collect the cord blood. This may happen if the delivery becomes complicated. If this happens, the mother’s health care provider may not advise cord blood collection for medical reasons.

What is Cord Blood Banking?

Cord blood banking means storing cord blood for future use.

You may decide to donate your baby’s cord blood to a public cord blood bank. This means the cord blood will be available to anyone who needs a stem cell transplant. Donated cord blood becomes the property of the public cord blood bank. Sometimes, stored cord blood does not contain enough stem cells for transplant. When this happens, the cord blood may be used for research or it may be discarded.

You may decide to bank your baby’s cord blood for your own family’s use. This is called private cord blood banking. The cord blood will be saved for your baby or a close family member to use in the future. Private cord blood banking may be a good idea if you have a family member with certain medical conditions and a stem cell transplant would be a treatment option. In this case, some private cord blood banks may store the cord blood at no cost to the donor.

Cord blood should not be stored as “insurance” for your baby. It may not be possible to use the stem cells to treat a disease that the baby gets later because the same disease may already be in the stored stem cells.

How Do I Bank My Baby’s Cord Blood?

If you decide to store your baby’s cord blood, you should contact a cord blood bank as early as possible. You should do this before your 34th week of pregnancy (six weeks before your due date). The cord blood bank will explain how the cord blood is to be collected, transported, stored, and what else you will need to do to prepare.

The cord blood bank will send you a medical history form, which includes questions about your health and your family health history. You will also receive a consent form that explains what tests will be done on the cord blood. This form should also tell you how you will be notified if any of the test results are abnormal. Be sure to read the consent form carefully before signing.

If you are approved by the cord blood bank, a cord blood collection kit will be sent to you. You must bring the kit with you at the time of delivery. Before your delivery, you should talk with your health care provider about your decision.

