



Cord Blood Banking

An Overview Of Cord Blood

Expectant parents are faced with many important decisions from the moment they find out that they are pregnant. It is a time of excitement, great hope, and love. It is also a time of concern and journey into the many options parents have to help ensure the best for their unborn child. One of the latest possibilities parents are now considering is the ability to have their physician collect cord blood, enriched with life-enhancing stem cells, easily and painlessly from the baby's umbilical cord at birth.

The Collection Process

Blood is collected from the umbilical cord attached to the placenta after the baby is born. The blood is then packaged in a collection kit provided by the cord blood bank, and then transported to the cord blood facility for processing and storage, where it remains as "insurance" for possible future use. Collected, processed, and stored by a reputable facility, parents are now provided with the potential ability to safeguard their baby's future health, and the health of their family.

Cord Blood Donation

Public Cord Bank Donation: St. Louis Cord Blood Bank (www.slcbbb.org)

Some families elect to donate the cord blood to a public facility, which means that anyone may have access to their child's cord blood - there is no guarantee that blood stored at a public cord blood will be available to the family if needed. There is no charge for this service and should be considered if you are not going to privately save the cord blood. Cord blood is a valuable resource which is often thrown away if patients are not proactive about banking.

Private Cord Bank Donation – while there are many good private cord bank donation programs in St. Louis one of the most reputable is Cord Blood Registry (www.cordblood.com)

Storing at a private cord blood facility insures that only the family will have access to the cord blood and stem cells if needed. There is typically a fee for processing the collected specimen as well as an annual storage fee.

Use Of Cord Blood

Stem cells taken from cord blood form the body's immune system foundation and manufacture blood and disease-fighting immune cells and while cord blood stem cells can be used without a perfect genetic match, when used by the baby, it is always a 100 percent match. And there is a 25 percent chance it will be an exact match for one of the baby's siblings. Cord blood stem cells can be used to treat a variety of cancers, such as Hodgkin's disease, as well as genetic diseases like sickle cell anemia, and immune system disorders such as severe combined immunodeficiency disorder. In recent medical history, these and other similar conditions have been treated with bone marrow cells. While bone marrow cells are not only painful to harvest and require an identical biological match to work, it is also a very costly process - insurance coverage is often not available or challenging to get approved. It is very time-consuming to go from "need" to "transplant." Not so when parents decide to store their child's unique umbilical cord blood. There is simply no waiting time necessary. It is available when needed.