



ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN



JULY 2023

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: INFANT CORD BLOOD BANKING



Expecting a baby can be an exciting time for soon-to-be-parents. It can also be overwhelming, with many decisions to make. One such decision parents today face is whether to donate, bank, or discard their baby's umbilical cord blood. Parents need to decide by the time of arrival or registration at the hospital or birth center where the child is to be born. Here are some things to consider when deciding what to do with your child's cord blood:

Cord blood is the blood contained in the placental blood vessels and umbilical cord, which connects an unborn baby to the mother's womb. Cord blood has hematopoietic progenitor cells (HPCs). At birth, cord blood is collected or "recovered" from the umbilical cord, if desired.

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If you are interested in cord blood banking, discuss your options with your health-care provider and a representative from the location where you plan to give birth.



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HPCs are blood-forming stem cells. HPCs are found in bone marrow, peripheral blood, and cord blood. These types of stem cells are routinely used to treat patients with cancers such as leukemia or lymphoma and other disorders of the blood and immune systems.

You can donate cord blood to a public cord blood bank, which will store it for potential future use by anyone who may need it. Alternatively, parents may arrange to store the cord blood in a private cord bank. That way the child from whom it was recovered can use it later if needed. First- or second-degree relatives can also use it.

Donating cord blood to a public bank adds to the supply and can potentially help others. Donating to a public bank is especially important for ethnic minorities, who are not well represented in cord blood banks. Public cord blood donation increases the chance of all groups finding a match. Only certain hospitals collect cord blood for storage in public banks, so ask your local hospital or birthing facility if this is a possibility for you.

If you decide to store cord blood in a private bank for personal or familial use later, you should

find out the total cost, including charges for collecting and processing cord blood and the annual storage fees. Prices for these services vary greatly.

If you are interested in cord blood banking, discuss your options with your health-care provider and a representative from the location where you plan to give birth. They can help you to ensure your wishes are followed and answer any questions you may have about cord blood banking.

More information on donating cord blood to a public cord blood bank, as well as banking cord blood with a private cord blood bank for personal or family use, is available on the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) website: <https://bloodstemcell.hrsa.gov>.

REFERENCES:

- <https://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/consumers-biologics/cord-blood-banking-information-consumers>
- <https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/cord-blood-banking>

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