

Umbilical Cord Blood

Many families ask about umbilical cord blood banking. Cord blood is the blood that remains in the placenta after a baby is born. In the past, this blood was discarded. However, like bone marrow, cord blood is rich in the blood-forming cells that can be used in transplants for patients with leukemia, lymphoma and many other life-threatening diseases. (These cells *are not* embryonic stem cells.)

If you have a child with cancer and you are pregnant, you might be eligible to participate in a program such as the Texas Cord Blood Bank Related Donor Program. This program stores cord blood collections for families if the baby-to-be-born has brother, sister or parent who might need a cord blood transplant. Collection of umbilical cord blood poses absolutely no risk to the baby, and the cord blood will be stored exclusively for your family at no cost.

If you are pregnant and your child being treated at Children's does not have a disease that would benefit from a cord blood transplant, we encourage you to consider donating it to a public cord blood bank. Although this takes a little bit of planning, you could donate your baby's umbilical cord blood to a public bank at no cost to you. These cells may be needed by someone else — someone with a life-threatening disease like leukemia or lymphoma who needs a transplant to survive.

If you are pregnant, ask your physician about the umbilical cord blood donation or learn more at <http://marrow.org>.

