



## Committed to your health and our community Cord Blood Awareness Month

“July is Cord Blood Awareness Month Across the Nation and we are proud to support our friends at BE THE MATCH (National Marrow Donor Program) in their efforts to reach expectant parents across the nation with useful facts and tips on why and how to save a newborn’s cord blood.”

“Today, stem cells are mainly used in the treatment of disease and in tissue regeneration. They largely come from one of three sources – cord blood, bone marrow and peripheral blood. Cord blood stem cells are found in the blood of the umbilical cord. Cord blood can be used to treat more than 70 diseases, including blood cancers like leukemia and lymphoma. If you’re an expectant parent, you have several options when donating cord blood to help treat blood cancers and other life-threatening diseases. Unless you choose one of these options, the

Umbilical cord and placenta are typically discarded after the baby is born. Donate to a public cord blood bank. When you donate to a public cord blood bank, your baby’s cord blood is available to any patient who needs a transplant. It is not reserved for your family. Currently only certain hospitals are able to collect umbilical cord blood for storage in public cord blood banks. Store in a family (private) cord blood bank. Family cord blood banks often store cord blood exclusively for use by the family. A fee for collection as well as annual storage fees will be required. Save for a sibling who has a medical need. When a biological sibling has a disease that may be treated with a cord blood transplant, parents can choose to save their baby’s cord blood for the sibling. Collecting and storing cord blood for sibling-directed donation is offered at



YELM FAMILY MEDICINE, PLLC

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WE WILL BE CLOSED THURSDAY, JULY 4TH. WE WILL REOPEN FRIDAY, JULY 5TH AT 9 AM. HAVE A SAFE AND FUN HOLIDAY.



little or no cost to eligible families. Contact a participating public cord blood bank or a family cord blood bank.

Cord blood banking: Public donation or family storage – what’s the difference?

### **Public banking**

When you donate your baby’s umbilical cord for public use: It’s available to any patient in need of a transplant; it is not reserved for your family members. There is no cost to you because public cord blood banks cover the fees associated with processing, testing and storing donated cord blood.

It’s collected under strict quality standards to make sure the cord blood unit is usable for transplant. If standards aren’t met, the cord blood unit may be used for research to improve the transplant process for future patients, or the unit will be discarded.

### **Private storage**

If you store the cord blood in a family (private) cord blood bank, it is reserved for your own family members. Family cord blood banks are available throughout the country for anyone. You are charged a fee for the collection and an annual fee to store the umbilical cord blood. More information about family cord

blood banks can be found in our cord blood.

When a woman is pregnant there are so many things to think about and decisions to make (from baby names to prenatal genetic testing).

One decision some families ponder is whether or not banking cord blood is right for them. In honor of National Cord Blood Awareness Month, here are some quick answers to common questions about cord blood to help get the moms- and dads-to-be you see in your practice thinking about what makes the most sense for their family.

1. What is cord blood and what good is it?

Cord blood is what’s left in the umbilical cord and placenta after a baby is born. It’s special because it has a high concentration of stem cells. These cells can be used to treat about 80 different diseases, including certain cancers (like leukemia), blood disorders (like sickle-cell anemia), and many others.

2. What are the options for saving cord blood?

There are two options for banking cord blood. It can be donated to a Public Bank, where anyone who needs it can look for a

match. Or it can be stored at a Family Bank for the baby’s family to use if it’s ever needed.

3. How much does it cost to bank cord blood?

Public banking is free. Family banking can be pricy, as there is usually a charge upfront to collect and process the blood and a yearly fee to store it.

4. How long can cord blood be stored?

Research is still being done. It may be good to know that transplants have been done with stem cells that have been stored for as long as 13 years, and stem cells that have been frozen for more than 20 years also still seem viable.

5. When do people need to make a decision?

Usually this is something to think about a few months before giving birth. Many Public Banks need women to register by their 34<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy. Registering with a Family Bank is usually similar. Both types of banks may need time to send a collection kit that’s taken to the doctor at the time of delivery.