



The Arizona Public Cord Blood Banking Program – Frequently Asked Questions

The Arizona Department of Health Services is proud to partner with the University of Colorado Cord Blood Bank to provide Arizona with a public umbilical cord blood banking program. The participating sites include:

- **St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center**
- **Maricopa Integrated Health System**
- **Phoenix Baptist Hospital**

In the past when a baby was born, the umbilical cord was thrown away. But today blood from the umbilical cord can be collected for children and adults with certain genetic or life-threatening diseases such as leukemia or lymphoma. More than 22,000 patients around the world have received transplants from donations to the public cord blood banks. Donating umbilical cord blood is a generous gift from you and your baby that may change someone else's life.

How is cord blood used? The umbilical cord has blood-forming cells. These cells are collected, stored and made available for any patient who needs donated cells due to a disease in their own cells such as leukemia or a genetic disorder. A transplant replaces a patient's unhealthy blood-forming cells with healthy ones.

Why are more donations needed? Seven out of 10 people will not have a suitable matched donor in their family and will depend on the *Be The Match Registry*, a registry operated by the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP), to find a match. Adding more cord blood units to the registry increases the likelihood that all patients will find a match.

Racially and ethnically diverse donors are especially needed.

Patients are more likely to match tissue types with someone who shares their racial or ethnic heritage. And since nearly 35 percent of cord blood units used in NMDP transplants go to ethnically or racially diverse patients, we strongly encourage donations from all racial and ethnic backgrounds.

What options are available for donating umbilical cord blood? You can choose to:

- Donate your baby's umbilical cord blood to a public cord blood bank, where it will be available to anyone who needs it.
- Pay to store it in a family (private) cord blood bank, where it is reserved for your own family.
- If you do nothing, the umbilical cord will be discarded after birth.

Why donate to a public cord blood bank versus a private cord blood bank? There is no cost to the donor, it is free and by donating umbilical cord blood, you have chosen to help someone in need of a potentially life-saving transplant. The cord blood will be stored at the public cord blood bank until needed by a patient; it is not saved for your family. Private banking requires the donor to pay a fee to process and store the cord blood; the fees vary, but average about \$1500 before birth and \$100 per year for storage.

How is cord blood collected? Donating cord blood does not interfere with the labor or delivery process. During the delivery, all the focus is on you and your baby. No blood is taken from your baby, only from the cord and placenta *after* the baby is born. For this public cord blood banking program, the collected cord blood will be transferred to the University of Colorado Cord Blood Bank where it will be processed. If the cord blood unit is suitable for transplant, it is tissue typed, then frozen and stored in a liquid nitrogen freezer. The cord blood unit is then listed on the NMDP's *Be The Match Registry*.

Is donated cord blood always stored? Not all donated cord blood is eligible to be banked. The collected cord blood unit must be large enough and free from infection or diseases. This ensures the cord blood unit is suitable for a patient needing a transplant.

Will my privacy be protected? You and your baby's identity are always kept confidential by the public cord blood bank. The cord blood unit is given a number at the hospital, and this is how it is identified on the registry and at the public cord blood bank.

Am I eligible to donate? You may be eligible to donate if you are:

- Expecting a single birth.
- Expecting a delivery of at least 35 weeks' gestation.
- At least 18 years old.

How do I donate? If you are interested in donating your baby's cord blood and plan to deliver your baby at one of the participating sites:

- Let your health care provider know you would like to donate your baby's cord blood
- When you are ready to deliver your baby, be sure to let the Labor and Delivery staff know that you would like to donate to the public cord blood bank.



To learn more about umbilical cord blood donation: Visit University of Colorado Cord Blood Bank's website at: <http://www.clinimmune.com/cordbloodbank/index.htm>

Contact the Rebecca Williams, the Clinical Nurse Coordinator, working with the participating sites, either by phone (602) 406-7021 or email: Rebecca.Williams@chw.edu.