



**March E-Newsletter, 2010**

**Topic: Facts About Cord Blood Banking**

Dear Friends,

**I can hardly believe it is already March!** This year is flying by, and the spring is already upon us. For those of you with summer due dates, that “to do” list is becoming a mile long. As you start to check things off your “preparing for baby” list, one of the important decisions you must make is about cord blood banking. In an effort to assist you with your research, this month we will be exploring some of the common misconceptions surrounding banking your baby’s umbilical cord blood.

Enjoy,

*Nurse Wendy*

### **Facts About Cord Blood Banking**

There are so many decisions to be made during your pregnancy. Choices such as, cloth or disposable? or breastfeeding or bottle feeding? can keep an expectant mom awake at night. While these are just a few of the important things to consider, another choice that requires some education and thought is what to do with your baby’s umbilical cord blood. In the past there was no choice; this blood was discarded as medical waste after the birth of the baby. However, in recent years, a tremendous amount of research has proven that this blood is a rich source of non-controversial stem cells which can be used to treat and cure 70 different diseases that could afflict your child or their siblings over the course of their life. Today, new parents have the option to bank their baby’s umbilical cord blood as a unique biologic insurance policy. The cells will be waiting, if and when the family might need them. Since this is a newer and emerging area of medical science, there are many misconceptions surrounding cord blood banking. I’d like to spend a few moments clearing up these misunderstandings so that you can make an informed decision for you and your growing family.

***“Storing my baby’s cord blood stem cells is controversial.”***

Umbilical cord blood stem cells are completely non-controversial and are in no way associated with embryonic stem cells. These cells are collected quickly and painlessly, only removing the blood left in the placenta and umbilical cord after the birth of the baby and after the umbilical cord is cut. The care provider simply removes what is leftover and would otherwise be discarded as medical waste.

***“Collecting the baby’s cord blood takes necessary blood away from the baby.”***

At PacifiCord we realize that baby’s need to transition to ex-utero life as gently as possible. In that regard, the cord blood collection process can occur easily after the cord has stopped pulsating or even after the delivery of the placenta. The collection instructions included in each cord blood collection kit provides step by step instructions for collection after delivery of the placenta, ensuring that baby



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receives all the blood he needs to transition from the birth process and allowing for cord blood collection, as well.

***“Transplant doctors will rarely use a person’s own stem cells to treat their disease.”***

A person’s own umbilical cord blood is currently being used to treat diseases that have non-genetic causes or that are environmentally-triggered (acute myeloid leukemia, forms of Hodgkin’s lymphoma, myeloma, solid tumors and autoimmune diseases, such as Multiple Sclerosis and Crohn’s disease). Additionally, cord blood transplants have been used to treat sickle cell anemia, neuroblastoma, aplastic anemia and lymphoblastic leukemia. A person can also use their own cord blood cells to reconstitute the bone marrow after chemotherapy treatment.

With the enormous advances, and over 3,000 human clinical trials being conducted involving regenerative medicine, cord blood use is becoming even more commonplace. Today treatments are underway using one’s own cord blood to treat Cerebral Palsy and Type 1 Diabetes. Thanks to private cord blood banks, like PacifiCord, children who have stored samples are able to participate in these clinical trials. Additional clinical research is also showing promise when using one’s own stem cells in the treatment of heart disease, stroke, ALS, Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, and spinal cord injuries.

***“I can donate my child’s cord blood to a public bank and it will probably be there for me in the future.”***

Expectant parents need to be aware that only a small percentage (approximately 30%) of the samples donated meet the requirements for public banking and are actually ever stored for future use. Additionally, once donated, all identifying markers are stripped from the cells so there would be no way to trace your donated sample if you ever needed it in the future. The chance of your sample being available to your child for medical treatment is almost impossible.

***“If my child needs a transplant I can locate one in a public bank.”***

Should your child require a stem cell match from a public bank, the process is not nearly as simple as it sounds. First, a matching sample must be located...this process takes 3-4 months on average, and if your child is of mixed race or from a minor ethnic group, the likelihood of locating a matching sample is much lower. If a match can be located, then you must purchase the cells at a cost ranging from \$25,000 - \$40,000. This cost is not typically covered under most medical insurance policies. Banking your baby’s umbilical cord blood with a private bank, like PacifiCord, ensures that a perfect matching sample is waiting if and when you might need it, saving your family both time and money.

***“Cord blood stem cells can only be stored for a short period of time.”***

According to The New York State Health Department guidelines for cord blood banking "There is no evidence at present that [cord blood stem] cells stored at minus 196 degrees Celsius in an undisturbed



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manner lose either in vitro-determined viability or biological activity. Therefore, at the current time, no expiration date need be assigned to cord blood stored continuously under liquid nitrogen."

At PacifiCord we are one of the rare private family banks who actually employ these guidelines. Our cord blood stem cells are stored under liquid nitrogen, undisturbed; in the BioArchive...this is the ONLY way to ensure long term cell viability

***"Cord Blood Banking is Expensive."***

Cord blood banking is an investment in your family's future as well as being an incredible value. Should the need arise, you will save a great deal of lifesaving time and money knowing that your child's stem cells are safely stored and ready to be used should a transplant become necessary. At PacifiCord, the cost of the collection kit, courier service, state of the art processing, and first year of storage under liquid nitrogen in the BioArchive is very reasonable. Not only is this an incredible value, PacifiCord offers their own in-house financing, requiring no credit checks, flexible payment plans to meet any budget, and specially trained Cord Blood Educators who can meet with you face-to-face to explore your options at a time and place convenient to you.

***"All private cord blood banks are the same."***

All cord blood banks are not created equal! As with any investment, I instruct parents to do their research and know exactly where and how their stem cells will be processed and stored. These are precious cells with lifesaving properties and need to be treated with kid gloves. Your cord blood contains live cells; therefore the bank you chose should be in close proximity of your birth location so there will be minimal time between collection and storage. PacifiCord is your local cord blood bank, and as such, can guarantee processing in under 24 hours. Additionally, this investment should not be trusted to outside agencies or exposed to airplane travels and x-ray machines. PacifiCord employs our own couriers who pick up your cord blood from the birth location and drives it directly to our lab for processing. No airports, no delays, no x-rays...from your hands to ours!

Another important consideration is how your cells are stored for long term. Most private banks store cells in traditional freezers within vapor nitrogen. Vapor nitrogen cannot hold a consistent temperature, and exposes cells to vast temperature fluctuations, which can damage the cell over time. Additionally, traditional freezers require the samples to be disturbed whenever adding or removing a sample. Research has proven that the only way to guarantee long term viability is to store under liquid nitrogen undisturbed. PacifiCord employs these practices to provide superior service and technology to their clients, staying true to the New York Department of Health guidelines for processing and storage.

I hope that I was able to clear up some of the more common misconceptions out there regarding cord blood banking and help you out with that always growing "to-do" list. If you have any other specific



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questions feel free to contact me and I would be happy to help! I look forward to spending more time with you again next month.

Be well,

*Nurse Wendy*

**QUESTIONS?**

Email me at: [AskNurseWendy@PacifiCord.com](mailto:AskNurseWendy@PacifiCord.com)