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Cord Blood Transplants Save Lives

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Recently, we told you about eight-month-old Jackson Blackford who was born blind because of a rare condition.

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He is on his way to China to receive treatment that uses umbilical cord stem cell injections from healthy babies.

Although this isn't a new procedure, many people aren't aware that pregnant mothers even have this option because there aren't many public cord blood registries available. □

We have the story of an area girl whose life was saved because of a simple donation that in many cases gets thrown away.

Take one look at nine-year-old Presley Nash in her Tae Kwon Do class, and it's hard to believe she was born with a genetic disorder that usually results in premature death.

It has been five years since she's received a life saving cord blood transplant and all she has now are happy memories.

"I get to see all my teachers and friends and run and play," Nash said.

But her grandmother Martha Houchin will never forget.

"Presley was close to death many times and I bargained and said I will educate the world about cord blood," Houchin assured.

She's an O.B. educator for The Medical Center and said it's so easy and painless to donate your baby's umbilical cord blood.

A public registry will pick it up free of charge or you can save your own through a private registry.

"The cord blood has stem cells and these stem cells can basically reproduce within the body," Houchin said.

Stem cells Presley received created an enzyme her body didn't produce on its own.

So by creating a whole new system, she is now completely free of this disease and doesn't need any medication.

Houchin said cord blood transplants are also being used for other illnesses such as leukemia, Alzheimer's and spinal cord injuries.

"With bone marrow, eight out of eight markers have to match, with cord blood only five have to match," she continued.

For Presley, it's another Tae Kwon Do class.

But for Martha, it's another day to spread the word and save a life.

Houchin said it takes a very small amount of blood from the umbilical cord to generate a whole new system in your body.

We have much more information on this subject [here](#).

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