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Is It Necessary For You To Donate Cord Blood?

Apurva Shree

September 3, 2007

'Donate cord blood' is what today's medical practitioners and doctors are advising yet-to-be parents across the world. Besides giving birth to a new life, pregnancy gives new hope for the survival of existing lives that are combating malignant ailments. Yes, the [stem cells](#) contained in the newborn baby's umbilical cord can help cure patients suffering from leukemia, severe anemia or acute disorders of the immune system. As researchers are coming up with newer advancements in treatment with blood forming cells, they strongly advocate the need for cord blood donation.

There was a time when the umbilical cord and the placenta received the least importance and were thrown away as waste. Understanding what these umbilical cord cells can do for patients suffering from various types of blood disorders, diseases of the immune system, spinal cord disorders has reversed the scenario. Doctors are now treasuring these cells instead of discarding them.

Simultaneously, parents-to-be are also shedding their inhibitions about the procedure of cord blood collection. Cord blood is collected AFTER the baby is born and before the placenta is delivered. In some cases, it is done after the placenta is delivered too. The collection process entails no risk or pain for either the mother or the new born baby.

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Blood banks, where donors decide to preserve their cells, supply advanced equipment for safe collection of cord blood cells. The [umbilical cord blood](#) stem cells can be collected regardless of the birth procedure. Mothers of both vaginal deliveries and caesarean deliveries can collect their babies' stem cells with no changes in the procedure of delivery.

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Stem cells found in babies' umbilical cords contain similar hematopoietic features that bone marrow stem cells possess. However, umbilical cord blood is richer in stem cells as compared to the bone marrow samples. These

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umbilical cord stem cells can produce any type of tissue or organ that includes three types of blood cells, which are red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets. Therefore, if your family has a history of or a family member has a medical condition that can be cured by bone marrow stem cell transplant like leukemia, Fanconi's Anemia, thalassemia, aplastic anemia, metabolic storage disorders or any immunodeficiency disorders and other genetic disorders, opting for cord blood transplant can prove to be a wiser decision.

Finding a matching donor is a major issue nowadays especially if the patient is from an ethnic minority group in the country where he resides. Among them African-American, Hispanic, native American patients and patients having origin of mixed races and ethnicity face the biggest hurdle in finding a matching bone marrow cell donor. If one of your family members has a condition that requires a transplant, donate cord blood cells. To find matching bone marrow stem cells is quite difficult, whereas, stem cells of umbilical cords show 25% greater chances of matching with the babies' parents and siblings. In fact your baby can be his own donor in cases of emergency.

The cord blood banking industry is introducing several convenient schemes to encourage more people to donate cord blood, to ensure their family members' and relatives protection from various malignant diseases.

Once always discarded into the trash bin, the blood derived from umbilical cords is today treasured for its [cord blood stem cells](#) that provide hope to innumerable patients suffering from serious diseases. Some people prefer cord

blood banking for future use by them or members of their family. Those who cannot afford or do not want to spend on cord blood preservation in cord blood banks can opt to [donate cord blood](#). For more information on cord blood banking and other pregnancy related subjects such as pregnancy symptoms, care during pregnancy, breastfeeding etc, visit [cord blood banking](#).