

# Umbilical Cord Blood Collection

## What is umbilical cord blood?

Umbilical cord blood is the blood left in the cord after the baby is delivered and the cord is clamped. This blood is rich with blood-forming stem cells.

## What are your options for your baby's cord blood?

Cord blood can be used to treat more than 80 diseases, including blood cancers like leukemia and lymphoma. You have several options for what happens to the cord blood after your baby is born. Unless you choose one of these options, the umbilical cord is 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. In San Francisco, we have a relationship with the non-profit Cleveland Cord Blood Center to allow families to donate their baby's cord blood. There is no charge to your family for this option. Not all hospitals have this option. Talk to your prenatal provider if you are not planning on delivering in San Francisco.
- **Store in a family (private) cord blood bank.** Family cord blood banks store cord blood exclusively for use by the family. A fee for collection as well as annual storage fees will be required. If you are interested in this option, please research the private banks available to find a good fit for your family.
- **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 little or no cost to eligible families. Ask your prenatal provider if you think your family could benefit from this.

## How can cord blood donation to a public bank save lives?

When a patient with leukemia, lymphoma or other life-threatening diseases needs a transplant, cord blood may be an option. A doctor will look for a donor or a cord blood unit with a tissue type that matches the patient's as closely as possible. Today, 14 percent of transplant patients receive cord blood that was generously donated to a public cord blood bank and listed anonymously on a registry of public cord blood donations for unrelated patient transplant.

Patients from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds often have a more challenging time finding a suitable matched donor. Adding donated cord blood from diverse communities to the registry increases the likelihood that every patient will find a life-saving match. In 2016, 29 percent of umbilical cord blood transplants were for patients of color (National Marrow Donor Program).

## What happens if you donate your baby's cord blood?

### Before birth:

At the hospital, mothers will be asked to complete appropriate paperwork to indicate your consent and give a small blood sample.

### After birth:

After your baby is born, the cord blood will be collected by your doctor along with the delivery of the placenta. You will have an interview about your health history as well as your family's history.

### Care of the donation:

A cord blood donation coordinator will ensure that the cord blood is safely transported to the blood bank. Your baby's cord blood will ultimately be stored and readied for its intended lifesaving work at some time in the future.

**The care of you and your baby will not change if you do or do not choose to donate.**

## Where can you learn more?

Tell your prenatal provider if you want to donate your baby's cord blood. Your provider can put you in contact with a program coordinator if you have additional questions.

There are also good resources available online:

- Visit [kp.org](http://kp.org). Enter **X622** in the search box to learn more about storing your baby's umbilical cord blood.
- Parent's Guide to Cord Blood Foundation ([parentsguidecordblood.org](http://parentsguidecordblood.org))
- National Marrow Donor Program ([bethematch.org](http://bethematch.org))
- Cleveland Cord Blood Center ([clevelandcordblood.org](http://clevelandcordblood.org))