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## **CORD BLOOD BANKING**

Cord Blood Banking is the process of collecting and saving the umbilical cord blood from your baby which may be done at the time of your baby's delivery in the hospital. In the past Bonfils Blood Center was accepting donations of cord blood in Colorado for a large general population. Unfortunately, the funding mechanism to maintain the donated blood for this project dried up and now only a few specific underrepresented ethnicities may be asked for targeted donations from time to time. Banking is available on an individual basis at a rather large expense to the individual patient by various private companies. The cost for this is not covered by your medical health insurance.

Currently, the benefit you and your family may receive from cord blood banking is that if your child or other close relative develops a rare medical illness which requires a stem cell transplant (similar to a bone marrow transplant), then a perfect match may already exist if you took the opportunity to collect the blood at the time of your delivery. The chance of your child actually needing this on an individual basis, however, is extremely low, probably in the range of 1 in 10,000-50,000 donations. Future applications may be much more varied – for example there is the possibility that stem cells may be used in treating or curing common illnesses such as diabetes. What future application may come to fruition can only be speculated at this time and may be strongly influenced by various unforeseen political pressures or changes in the law. So how likely is it that your collection today will actually be used by you or another family member is difficult to predict.

Typically there large up-front collection and processing fee of about \$1000-\$2000 and then a continuing storage expense fee of about \$100/year, which may vary significantly between different companies. Whether or not you feel this is a worthwhile investment is a very personal decision and your obstetrician will not push you to decide one way or the other.

Our practice takes no position on the advisability of cord blood collection, although we are disappointed about the dissolution of public blood banking which was independently funded. However, we do feel that we have a responsibility to inform our patients of the existence of this technology. We advise you do careful research on your own if you are interested in doing a cord blood collection at the time of your delivery. If you do choose to have your baby's cord blood collected it is your responsibility to bring the collection kit to the hospital when in labor, prior to the delivery of the baby. Your provider will do everything possible to support your decision and make every effort to collect an adequate sample. The patient needs to be aware that occasionally due to unforeseen circumstances that are entirely out of our control, such as a very short cord or complex nuchal cord, your provider may simply not be able to get an adequate sample.