

Cord blood collection at the Women's

This fact sheet explains how to donate your baby's cord blood to the BMDI Cord Blood Bank. It also explains why the Royal Women's Hospital does not collect cord blood for private companies.

What is cord blood?

Cord blood is the blood left in the placenta and umbilical cord after your baby is born.

The placenta and the blood within it are usually discarded after birth. At the Women's, you can choose to donate your baby's cord blood to the public BMDI Cord Blood Bank.

Cord blood is rich in blood stem cells. Doctors use stem cells to treat serious blood and immune disorders, including leukaemia and bone marrow failure.

Researchers are also studying how cord blood may help treat disease in the future.

Why donate cord blood?

The Women's supports cord blood donation because:

- donating is your choice
- donating is free
- your donation may help a child or adult who needs treatment
- your donation can be used anywhere in the world if it is the best match for a patient
- if there is not enough cord blood collected, and you agree, your donation may be used for approved medical research or for quality control processes.

What is involved?

If you want to donate your baby's cord blood, a BMDI Cord Blood Bank midwife will explain the donation process and answer your questions.

They will ask about your health to see if you are eligible to donate.

If you can donate, we will ask you to give your consent.

A BMDI Cord Blood Bank midwife will collect the cord blood after your baby is born. They may collect the cord blood in the birth suite or operating theatre.

Sometimes, your obstetrician may help with the collection. Other hospital staff do not collect cord blood.

Collecting cord blood won't hurt you or your baby.

The cord blood will be sent to a laboratory at the Royal Children's Hospital. They will check to see if it is suitable for storage and future use.

Sometimes the cord blood may not be suitable for processing and storage. If this happens, and you have given your consent, the cord blood may be used for research or other approved purposes. The BMDI Cord Blood Bank midwife will explain these options to you.

Making sure the cord blood is safe

To help make sure the cord blood is safe for patients, we will:

- take a sample of blood from your arm to check for infections and identify your tissue type
- ask about your health and your family's medical history while you are in hospital
- call you about 6 months later to complete a health questionnaire.

Interested in donating?

To register your interest:

- Complete a Donor Enrolment Form and place it in the BMDI Cord Blood Bank letterbox on the antenatal clinic reception desk on Level 1 or in The Women's Welcome Centre on the Ground Floor.
- Call the BMDI Cord Blood Bank on (03) 8345 3385 for an information pack, service hours and contact details.

BMDI Cord Blood Bank

The BMDI Cord Blood Bank is run by the Royal Children's Hospital, the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, the Bone Marrow Donor Institute and the Fight Cancer Foundation.

Storing your baby's cord blood with a private company

Some private companies store cord blood for families for a fee. They store the cord blood in case it may be used to treat a family member in the future.

The Women's does not agree there is enough evidence to support the future health benefits some companies advertise.

Early research shows encouraging results in cord blood stem cell transplantation for a variety of diseases. However, it is considered experimental and more research is needed.

There is not enough reliable evidence to show that a family member is the best donor for a cord blood transplant.

Donating cord blood to a public cord blood bank at no cost allows it to be available to patients who need it.

Why doesn't The Women's collect cord blood for private companies?

The Women's policy is not to collect cord blood for private companies because:

- it is not always possible to collect blood from the cord, so we cannot guarantee blood will be collected
- we cannot guarantee the condition of the blood after it leaves the hospital
- we do not endorse commercial services or products when the benefits for patients are not fully supported by scientific evidence
- we cannot provide staff to collect cord blood for private storage.

We regularly review our policy and may update it as more research becomes available.

Family Violence Support

1800 Respect National Helpline

You can get help if you have experienced sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.

You can call any time of day or night.

1800 737 732 1800respect.org.au

For more information

Royal Children's Hospital

www.rch.org.au

Murdoch Institute for Children's Research

www.mcric.edu.au

Fight Cancer Foundation

www.fightcancer.org.au

Cord Blood Bank Coordinators

The Women's, Lower Ground Floor
20 Flemington Road, Parkville VIC 3052

Ph: (03) 8345 3385

Email: cordblood@thewomens.org.au

Disclaimer: This fact sheet provides general information only. For specific advice about your or your baby's healthcare needs, you should seek advice from your health professional. The Royal Women's Hospital does not accept any responsibility for loss or damage arising from your reliance on this fact sheet instead of seeing a health professional. If you or your baby require urgent medical attention, please contact your nearest emergency department.
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