

Banking On Your Baby's Future: Cord Blood Helps Families Stay Healthy

(NAPSA)—Baseball Hall-of-Famer Rod Carew unfortunately knows the importance of saving newborn babies' cord blood.

In 1996, Carew lost his daughter after months of searching unsuccessfully for a bone-marrow transplant donor to treat her leukemia. Had his daughter's cord blood been banked when she was born—a service not available at the time—doctors may have been able to use it to treat her condition.

"Privately banking a newborn's cord blood stem cells is the best gift a parent can give to their child," says Carew. "I wish the option was available when my daughter was born. Now, it's easy."

Cord blood is blood taken from a newborn's umbilical cord. It can be banked and used to treat approximately 80 diseases that people may develop throughout life. Experts also believe that cord blood stem cells hold promise to potentially treat heart disease; diabetes; neurodegenerative diseases including ALS, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's; and spinal cord injury.

No doubt that explains why experts, such as Harvey Karp, MD, a pediatrician and author of the best-selling book and DVD, "The Happiest Baby on the Block," call cord blood stem cells "an important lifeline to a healthy future."



Banking a newborn's cord blood stem cells may be the best gift parents give their child.

"Umbilical stem cells are a medical miracle. They are already being used to treat life-threatening diseases, such as leukemia and sickle cell anemia," says Dr. Karp, "and we have every reason to believe that, in the future, researchers will discover many other life-saving uses for them."

"I encourage parents to bank their newborn's cord blood," says Dr. Karp. "It's the only way to ensure a perfect match if their child ever needs stem cells in the future. Parents should consult their physicians or contact a reputable umbilical cord blood bank, such as LifebankUSA to learn more."

If you are interested in providing this type of protection for your family, the experts recommend

that you consider the following factors in selecting the cord blood bank that serves as home to your newborn's cord blood stem cells.

- Choose a facility accredited for meeting the standards set by the American Association of Blood Banks or the International Organization for Standardization.

- Look for a cord blood bank that maintains intensive research programs aimed at furthering the use of non-controversial umbilical cord blood stem cells for life-saving treatments.

- When considering costs, seek out a facility that offers different payment plans or an incentive for repeat customers who may want to bank the blood of future children or for referrals.

- It's also a good idea to look for a blood bank that's publicly traded, or one with a publicly traded parent company. That can make it easier to research its financial history and assess its stability.

Expectant parents can store their newborn's cord blood stem cells with facilities such as LifebankUSA (www.lifebankusa.com), a leading cord blood stem cell bank that maintains an aggressive research program. Additional resources include www.parentsguidecordblood.com and the National Bone Marrow Donor Program (www.marow.org).