

# NEWS OF HEALTH

## Importance of Cord Blood Donation

(NAPSA)—On his or her very first day in the world, a newborn baby may be able to help save someone's life.

After a baby is born, the blood in the umbilical cord can be a life-line for someone else—a child or adult with leukemia or another life-threatening illness—and by donating this blood, both baby and mother can become heroes.

When people are treated for Hodgkin's disease, anemia and other blood-borne diseases, their stem cells—the building blocks of healthy blood—are often wiped out. Cord blood, like bone marrow, contains stem cells. However, cord blood is easier to obtain than bone marrow, with more than 10,000 potential donors born every day.

### Who benefits?

Every year, about 9,000 people are diagnosed with diseases that can be treated by cord blood transplantation. Most of these patients are unable to find a donor through any of the donor registries. It is particularly difficult for African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans and other ethnic minorities to find donors.

### How does it work?

The donation process generally begins near the start of the third trimester of pregnancy, when the expectant parents make the decision to donate their baby's cord blood. The mother's blood is then tested and her health history is obtained.



**The blood shared by mother and newborn could help save another person's life.**

Immediately after the baby is born, the umbilical cord is clamped and the baby is separated from the cord. The attending physician sticks a needle into the cord vein and draws the placental blood. After that, the blood is sent to a cord blood bank, where it is typed, frozen and stored until it is needed. When a match is identified, the stored cord blood can be shipped anywhere in the world.

There is no cost to the donating family, and cord blood transplants boast a very optimistic success rate. Families interested in donating their child's cord blood are encouraged to contact the National Marrow Donor Program at 800-526-7809 as early as possible in the pregnancy—preferably between 28 and 30 weeks.

The National Children's Cancer Society encourages you to speak with your doctor or visit [www.marrow.org](http://www.marrow.org).