

Pointers For Parents & Expectant Parents

New Approach To Juvenile Diabetes Gains Attention

(NAPSA)—A first-of-its-kind study is generating interest in a new approach to treating juvenile diabetes and giving expectant parents—especially those with a family history of the disease—a new reason to take note.

The ongoing research—being conducted at the University of Florida—is demonstrating that the severity of type 1 diabetes can be reduced by giving children with the disease stem cells collected from their own umbilical cords. Children in the study demonstrated lower blood sugar levels and required less insulin (a hormone given to treat diabetes) than the control group.

Type 1—or juvenile diabetes—is a disease that involves a failure of the body's immune system to recognize its own cells as non-threatening, leading to progressive destruction of insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. Researchers believe that using stem cells from one's own cord blood (referred to as autologous therapy) might keep the immune system from attacking the pancreas and possibly help stop progression or development of the disease.

Successful Treatments

Stem cells from umbilical cord blood have been used for more than 20 years to treat nearly 70 diseases including certain types of cancers and blood disorders such as leukemia, lymphoma and sickle-cell anemia. A decade ago, less than 1 percent of Americans were banking cord blood. Today, that figure has grown to about 4 percent and is rising, largely due to the impact that cord blood treatment may have in regenerative medicine—the science of using the body's own cells to repair damaged tissue and organs. More than one in three Americans, approximately 128 million people, could benefit from regenerative therapies using stem cells from preferred sources like cord blood. Regenerative medicine



Family cord blood banks such as Cord Blood Registry make it possible for children with diabetes to potentially benefit from stem cell research.

studies are already well under way in a variety of therapeutic areas in addition to type 1 diabetes, including heart disease, cerebral palsy, and spinal cord and brain injuries.

Fighting Diabetes

The new links between cord blood stem cells and diabetes treatment could be especially important, as the number of children diagnosed with type 1 diabetes continues to increase.

Nearly 21 million Americans have some form of diabetes, resulting in annual health care costs of \$132 billion. Type 1 diabetes alone affects one in every 300 children, a number expected to soon reach 3 to 5 percent annually. Diabetes affects the body's ability to process sugar and can lead to a host of complications ranging from kidney disease to blindness. Since regenerative medicine focuses on treatments designed to restore function in damaged tissue or organs, this field has the potential to save millions of lives and billions of dollars within our current health care system.

How To Bank Cord Blood

Expectant parents who want to preserve their newborn's cord blood for future medical use should consider banking with an experienced family cord blood bank, such as Cord Blood Registry (CBR). To learn more, visit www.cordblood.com.