

Memorial

Hospital of South Bend*

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For Immediate Release

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Memorial Hospital and Donor Services of Indiana Team Up for Cord Blood Donations

Mothers delivering at Memorial Hospital now have the option to donate stem cells from their baby's umbilical cord blood, umbilical cord, and placenta for use in medical research and transplantation. This program, a partnership between Memorial Health System and Donor Services of Indiana (DSI) in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, has been in place since March, 2009. It is a free service to any parent wanting to participate.

The cells collected from umbilical cord blood, umbilical cords and placentas are a non-controversial type of stem cell (these are not embryonic stem cells) that may offer wide-ranging opportunities for advancements in the field of medicine.

Hemopoethic stem cells, isolated from cord blood, are the building blocks of our blood and the foundation of our immune system. They can reproduce into red cells (these carry oxygen throughout our bodies), white cells (these fight off infections) and platelets (these create clots, preventing us from bleeding excessively).

Mesenchymal Stromal Cells are stem cells isolated from umbilical cords. These stems cells may arrest Crohn's disease, Parkinson's disease, and the military is interested in them because they have the ability to grow bone. Those cells are currently in the research stage, but should be in clinical trials as soon as this year.

Amnion stem cells are isolated from the amnion layer of the placenta. A thin layer is cut and used for ocular resurfacing, nerve wrapping and mandible repair. Just one placenta can help up to 100 people with chemical eye burns.

Research provides a process to isolate the stem cells and provide those cells to researchers studying the immune system and its cells that fight cancer, AIDS and other immune compromising diseases. This research may possibly lead to the development of new drugs, vaccines and treatments.

At least 70 diseases have been treated with these stem cells, including cancers, blood disorders, immune deficiency diseases, genetic diseases and others. In fact, it has been reported in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that between 7,000 and 8,000 umbilical cord blood stem cell transplants have been performed.

Donating cord blood does not change a mother's labor or delivery experience. The collection process begins only after the baby is born and does not interfere with the family's time together before, during or after the child's birth.

Most women with full-term pregnancies and uncomplicated births (with normal birth weights) can qualify as candidates for cord blood banking. Mothers also need to have consented to the donation prior to delivery, which can be done when mothers are admitted for delivery.

Donated material is stored in a national registry system through the National Marrow Donor Program, located in Minneapolis, MN. There is no fee to donate to the national registry.

For more information, please call 574-647-7271, or 877-749-9105.

If you would like more information, or want to talk to a family who has decided to donate, please call Maggie Scroope at 574-647-3234.

About Memorial Regional Childbirth Center

Memorial is the hospital of choice for those who desire a family-centered maternity experience with the added assurance of a highly specialized staff and the most advanced equipment for any special needs that may arise. From individualized care for mother and baby to special attention to the needs of the family, we offer many outstanding resources, services, and special touches to celebrate your delivery.

About Donor Services of Indiana

Donor Services of Indiana (DSI) provides human allograft tissues and services to save and enhance patient's lives. DSI provides procurement and distribution of quality tissue grafts serving donor families, physicians, hospitals and our community partners. While DSI supports emergency requests nationally and internationally, the vast majority of tissue is returned to help people right here in Indiana.

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