



Women and
Children's Health

North Bristol **NHS**
NHS Trust

Commercial umbilical cord blood collection



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This patient information leaflet has been written to advise families who are considering commercial umbilical cord blood collection after the birth of their baby at North Bristol NHS Trust.

Background

Commercial umbilical cord blood collection refers to a service offered by 'for-profit' companies to harvest and store stem cells following family requests even though there may be no medical indication. A significant number of private companies are now heavily marketing their cord blood services through GP surgeries, antenatal clinics and direct contact with the public. The service costs between £800 and £1,000 and requires a third person to collect umbilical cord blood in the third stage of labour in the provided container. This is then sent to the company for the harvesting and storage of stem cells.

The major clinical use of cord blood has been for life threatening conditions such as cancers of the blood. Cord blood contains the stem cells which are responsible for producing all the blood cells in the body. These cells can be used successfully as an alternative to bone marrow for transplants. Some families are at particular risk from rare inherited disorders. For these women cell banking may provide an easier route to a cell match that may be needed in their family. Under these circumstances arrangements can be made by professionals through the NHS Cord Blood Bank (NHS CBB) for their blood to be collected and stored.

Policy for Cord Blood Collection for Stem Cells at North Bristol NHS Trust

The Royal College of Midwives (2002) and the Royal College of Obstetricians (2006) do not support the commercial collection of cord blood for low risk families due to the current lack of research evidence to support the procedure. This service of commercial cord blood collection for stem cells for low risk families is therefore not offered at North Bristol NHS Trust.

If parents still decide to go ahead with this procedure the maternity unit request that the parents will provide a trained third party to obtain the sample. The advice and training for this should be available from the private company offering the service. When there is medical indication for cord blood collection due to a family history of life threatening conditions such as cancers of the blood, please discuss this with your obstetrician who will be able to refer you appropriately for arrangement and advice of the process for collection. A third party will be requested to be available from them to perform the cord blood collection. The midwife will be unable to assist in this process following your baby's birth.

References

RCM Position statement (2002) available at info@rcm.org.uk

RCOG advice on Cord Blood banking and Storage (RCOG 2006) available at www.rcog.org.uk

NHS Constitution. Information on your rights and responsibilities. Available at www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/constitution



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Central Delivery Suite
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Cossham Birth Centre
0117 340 8460



Day Assessment Unit
St Michael's Hospital, Bristol
0117 928 5395



Delivery Suite
St Michael's Hospital, Bristol
0117 928 5214



Day Assessment Unit
Royal United Hospital, Bath
01225 824 447
or 01225 824 847



www.nbt.nhs.uk/maternity

If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading
this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.