





## What are my options to bank my baby's cord blood?

In Australia, there are two options:

1. Donate to a public cord blood bank. If an altruistic non-directed donation is chosen, donated cord blood is made available to all patients in need of a blood stem cell transplant in Australia or overseas. No fee is charged for storage. This cord blood will not be kept specifically for your family's use. In special circumstances, your baby's cord blood will be made available for use by your baby or another family member, if it is still in the bank.
2. Storage in a private cord blood bank for potential use only by your baby or other family members. These banks are private companies and charge a fee for their processing and a fee for storage services. The main idea behind storing your baby's blood in a private cord bank is that one day, your child may become ill and you may be able to use those stem cells for treatment even though the chances of needing to use it are very low. Parents should be aware that many diseases cannot be treated with stem cells, especially if the disease is genetic in origin. This type of banking cannot be viewed as a health insurance policy.

In Aoteroa New Zealand, the only option is to have it banked privately.

All information related to your cord blood donation and your medical and family history is allocated a unique reference number. Only staff at the cord blood bank are able to link this number to your personal details. All information identifying you and your baby is kept confidential and is not passed on to anyone other than you, your doctor and other healthcare professionals involved in your or your baby's care.

## What is required if I wish to donate my baby's cord blood?

Participation in donation programs is completely voluntary. There may be circumstances when cord blood collection cannot be guaranteed. This is because staff priority is to provide optimal care to mother and baby and due to availability of collection staff.

If enough stem cells are collected to bank the cord blood, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire about your personal and family medical history and give a blood sample which is tested to determine eligibility. After a period of six months, you will be contacted to check on the health of your baby since donation. This information is required to ensure the safety of blood and cell products for use in the future.

DISCLAIMER: This document is intended to be used as a guide of general nature, having regard to general circumstances. The information presented should not be relied on as a substitute for medical advice, independent judgement or proper assessment by a doctor, with consideration of the particular circumstances of each case and individual needs. This document reflects information available at the time of its preparation, but its currency should be determined with regard to other available information. RANZCOG disclaims all liability to users of the information provided.

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