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## **Helping families store their baby's cord blood stem cells.**

**Virgin Health Bank was developed to meet the needs of families who are considering banking their baby's cord blood stem cells and want the support of an ethically motivated organisation committed to delivering high quality services.**

We empower families to make informed decisions about storing their baby's cord blood stem cells by providing them with accurate and honest information. We do not pressure families into buying our services.

We create high quality cord blood stem cell units ready for use in transplants and consult with leading transplant physicians to ensure that the stem cell units are of the quality they require.

We know that it's important for families to have access to processes and technologies which represent today's best practice in cord blood banking.

Your baby's cord blood will be processed and stored at Biovault Technical Limited, a HTA licensed stem cell laboratory using a red cell depletion method which public banks use for the production of stem cell units for transplants.

We believe that stem cell banks and their operations should be strictly regulated and are proud to operate under a licence issued to us by the Human Tissue Authority.

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**Find out more at [www.virginhealthbank.com](http://www.virginhealthbank.com)**



## What are stem cells?

**Stem cells are the body's master cells. All of the cells and tissues that make up the human body come from these cells.** Umbilical cord blood has been identified as a rich source of these master cells, which can be collected just after a baby is born using a straightforward, safe and painless technique. The collection involves no risk and poses no harm to either the mother or her newborn baby.

Unlike bone marrow stem cells, which age in the same fashion as we do, cord blood stem cells stored at birth retain the same vitality and flexibility as when they were collected. This gives them a number of advantages over stem cells obtained from bone marrow, such as lower rates of rejection and reduced risk of infection being transmitted from viruses. Doctors have been using cord blood stem cell transplants to successfully treat patients since 1988.



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## Why store your baby's cord blood stem cells?

Today, stem cells obtained from cord blood are used in the treatment of over 80 diseases. Amongst these diseases are blood cancers like leukaemias and blood disorders such as Thalassaemia and Sickle Cell Anaemia. Some treatments can be carried out using the patient's own cells and some require stem cells from a donor.

Around the world increasing numbers of families are becoming aware of the present and future lifesaving potential of cord blood stem cells and are choosing to collect and store their baby's cord blood stem cells in dedicated stem cell banks. They do this to ensure that the stem cells are available should their child or a genetically matched family member require them as part of a treatment plan, or to ensure they are available to take advantage of future developments in regenerative medicine.

Today, there is a major focus on the development of therapies that utilise stem cells and over 1000 clinical trials are being undertaken to develop a variety of new treatments. It is hoped that the outcome of these trials will result in treatments being developed for conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, cerebral palsy, Parkinson's disease, muscular dystrophies and other debilitating and life threatening diseases.

## Our services

Virgin Health Bank offers a truly unique choice of cord blood banking services to its customers:

### Option One – Family Banking Price £1895

Family Banking means that all the stem cells collected from your baby's cord blood are stored for 25 years for your exclusive use. The price for this service is £1895, which includes everything you need to collect, process and store your baby's cord blood, such as the collection kit, specialist transportation, high quality processing, long-term storage and all the necessary tests.

### Option Two – Community Banking Price £995

Community Banking is a way for you to keep a small amount of your baby's stem cells for your own family, but at the same time support your community and potentially contribute to saving someone else's life in the future. This service uses the same high quality processing, testing and storage procedures as in Option One, our Family Banking service, and includes 25 years of storage. The price for this service is £995.

**Importantly, using this service means that your family will only retain the stem cells from the first 5ml of cord blood collected. All the remaining cells will be donated to the public through our cell donation programme.**

These donated units are made available to other families who require them for lifesaving transplants. Virgin Health Bank does not make a charge to the recipient of the cells or to the transplant centre beyond recovering the costs of preparing and transporting the unit.

It is important to remember that the stem cells contained within the 5ml portion that your family retains are not sufficient to create a treatment unit on their own. However, over the next five to ten years cell expansion and regenerative medicine technologies are expected to become available, which may allow this unit to be utilised for a treatment on its own.



## The process

**Our specially trained team of Customer Advisors will help you through the application process and ensure you have the information you need to make an informed choice about collecting your newborn baby's cord blood.**

After your baby is born the umbilical cord is clamped and cut. The blood remaining in it is collected by a straightforward process that causes neither harm nor discomfort to either the mother or her newborn baby.

A sample of the mother's blood is taken at the same time and sent for testing to make sure we can identify any conditions that may influence how we manage the collected cord blood.

The cord blood and the sample of the mother's blood are then transported to Addenbrooke's stem cell laboratory, where the unit is processed and stored.

Please note that not all NHS hospitals allow their staff to participate in the collection of cord blood, which means you may need to engage a private phlebotomist who meets our quality criteria. We will help you with that process if required.

Once the storage process has been successfully completed we will inform you and provide you with a Certificate of Storage for your records. Your baby's cord blood then remains safely and securely stored for the entire period of the agreement, or until you tell us otherwise.

If you have chosen our Family Banking service (Option One) all of the stem cells collected are for your exclusive use and nothing will be done to them or with them without your express permission.

If you have chosen our Community Banking service (Option Two) then we manage the donated cells but the remaining portion of the unit is treated in exactly the same way as in our Family Banking service, it is for your exclusive use and nothing will be done to it or with it without your express permission.

If you require your child's stem cells for a transplant, Virgin Health Bank will work directly with your doctors to make the cells available.

At the end of the storage period we will contact you and your child to discuss the options that are available to them for the future management of their stem cells.



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## Our charges

Virgin Health Bank charges an all-inclusive fee that includes everything you need to collect, process and store your baby's cord blood, such as all administration costs, the collection kit, specialist transportation, high quality processing, long-term storage and all the necessary tests.



**Option One: Family Banking Service is £1895 and includes 25 years of storage**

**Option Two: Community Banking Service is £995 and includes 25 years of storage**

Applying for either service requires the payment of a non-refundable £300 booking fee with the balance payable when the cord blood unit is accepted into storage.

We cannot reuse an issued collection kit for anyone else, once you have received it. This means that if you change your mind, or do not use the collection kit after you have received it, we must cover the cost of the collection kit and cannot refund the £300 booking fee.

## Contacting us

Virgin Health Bank is committed to helping you make the right decisions for your family and we are on hand to answer any questions you may have in person, or online. Our team of specially trained, UK-based Customer Advisors can be contacted by calling the lo-call number below, so you can speak to a real person who will try their very best to answer all your questions.

**Call us on 0845 620 9665, email us at [enquiries@virginhealthbank.com](mailto:enquiries@virginhealthbank.com) or visit us online at [www.virginhealthbank.com](http://www.virginhealthbank.com)**



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