Umbilical Cord Blood Banking: A Primer for Prenatal Care Providers
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The following questions were submitted during the Umbilical Cord Blood Banking webinar presented by Amy Levi and Lee Shulman on October 20, 2015. Questions have been edited for clarity.

Would delayed cord clamping decrease the volume expected to be collected?

LS: Yes. Delayed cord clamping will tend to reduce to volume collected, but not the quality of the sample. Once the cord is clamped, the placenta and cord go through a quick clotting process so small vessels and not-so-small vessels are clotted off. Because of this, the volume of the cord blood has the potential to be reduced.

Do you recommend we keep the banked cord blood for the life of the individual?

LS: There’s never a guarantee that the cord blood sample will be available, viable, and provide the desired benefit, even if it is needed. Clearly, there are examples where it is viable, but it’s never a guarantee. The recommendation is that if it is collected and if, for example, the financial issues of keeping it stored are not a problem, there’s no reason why you would get rid of that particular sample from the bank.

AL: If it’s a private bank, they do talk about how long they will hold onto any particular sample. For public banks, as long as they are usable samples, they will continue to store them.

What about any liability issues if I collect cord blood for banking but the specimen is inadequate?

AL: It goes back to the individual blood bank. If a patient wants to have the cord blood banked and it’s not possible to provide a good specimen, the cord blood company will reimburse the patient for any expense they’ve incurred—that’s been my experience. As any of us who attend births know, it’s not always possible to do an appropriate cord blood collection. Dr. Shulman did a very extensive review of the situations those very precious hematopoietic cells can be used for, but patients need to understand what the limitations are as well as the benefits. As clinical providers, it’s our responsibility to make sure they fully understand their options.