



Written by [Steven J. DuBord](#) on November 11, 2009

## Cord Blood Stem-cells Healed Little Girl

Back in 2006, little Chloe Levine was born as the apparently healthy baby girl her parents had been waiting for. Sadly, before her first birthday, Chloe began to show signs of what turned out to be cerebral palsy. Only the fact that her parents had banked her umbilical cord blood — replete with stem cells — eventually saved Chloe.



The problems began at nine months. Chloe began keeping her right hand clenched in a fist and couldn't hold her bottle or support her weight with her right arm. She would shuffle across the floor on her bottom while in a seated position.

It wasn't until just after Chloe's first birthday that the doctors finally found an answer to what was wrong. Chloe had suffered a stroke while she was still within her mother, and she had been born with cerebral palsy despite her initial healthy appearance.

"A part of me just died," Chloe's mother, Jenny, said about hearing the news. "At that point there was no cure for her, no treatment other than therapies — speech, physical and occupational therapy for the next 18 years. As parents, that was not fine. We wanted her to have as normal a life as possible; we didn't want her to face a life of disability."

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Then the Levines recalled that they had banked Chloe's umbilical cord blood at birth. They thought the potent stem cells in the cord blood might offer some hope for Chloe's condition.

Stem cells from bone marrow have been used for decades to treat blood-related diseases, immune system disorders, and cancers. Fox News on November 9 [reported](#), "Stem cells have been known to jumpstart a person's immune system, especially after an intense round of chemotherapy."

Fox News mentioned that David Zitlow, vice president of corporate communications at Cord Blood Registry, the world's largest cord-blood bank, sees advantages to using cord-blood stem cells over other types. These cells "are younger, they have not been exposed to environmental factors like viruses or chemicals, which can alter the cell's structure and function — and if you are using your own cord blood cells, your body can't reject them," Fox News summarized.

Collecting the umbilical cord blood is easy. After the baby is born, a syringe is used to withdraw the blood from the cord without the pain that accompanies bone marrow cell collection. The blood is bagged and sent to the blood bank chosen by the parents, where it can be stored indefinitely.

Fortunately for Chloe, Dr. Joanne Kurtzberg, a professor of pediatrics and pathology at Duke University, was studying the effects of cord-blood stem cells on children with cerebral palsy. Dr. Kurtzberg was able to give two-year-old Chloe a 15-minute re-infusion of the child's own stem cells on May 28, 2008.

"The doctor is really cautious about what she tells patients," Jenny Levine commented. "She didn't have



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a whole lot of results coming in. The best case scenario, we'd see signs of improvement in six months to a year."

But blessings never cease, and little Chloe started to show improvement within four days. Chloe's right side relaxed and her speech began to improve. She began to do the little things that were signs of miraculous progress, such as riding her toy tractor, which she had not been able to pedal before.

"Her life is completely normal, she doesn't drag her right foot, she can use her right hand," Jenny Levine declared. "She rides a bike, a scooter ... we're taking her skiing this year. She's fabulous."

And so is the potential for cord-blood stem cells, with proven success stories like Chloe's. Adult stem cells also have been used in many successful treatments. Only embryonic stem cells have a track record of zero successes while costing the lives of helpless human beings. It is only logical, ethical, and moral for medical science to focus its efforts on the stem cells that truly offer hope and that don't require the destruction of human life in the process.

*Photo of Stephen Grant, co-founder of the Cord Blood Registry: AP Images*



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