

Umbilical cord blood transplants help people of all races

Black or African American children may have more side effects



A new study found that patients lived equally long after umbilical cord blood transplant, no matter their race.

Blood or marrow transplant (BMT) can cure blood cancers, sickle cell disease, and more. However, many people don't have a fully matched donor for BMT. It's especially hard for people with diverse heritage to find a match.

But, transplants using umbilical cord blood can help all people get a transplant because cord blood doesn't need to be closely matched. Cord blood is donated after a baby is born; it comes from the placenta and umbilical cord.

The new study included 2,600 patients who had a blood cancer, such as leukemia or lymphoma. Everyone got a cord blood transplant in the US during 2007-2017.

Patients' backgrounds were:

- Asian,
- Black or African American,
- Latinx,
- and/or White.

(Some racial groups did not have enough patients to include in the study: American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander.)

Researchers found:

- Adults and children lived equally long after cord blood transplant, regardless of their race (Asian; Black or African American; Latinx; and/or White).

- Black or African American children were more likely than other groups to have a side effect called severe graft-versus-host disease (GVHD) in the first few months after transplant.
- Matched or mismatched cord blood worked equally well.
- Transplanting a higher number of cord blood cells was more helpful than matching the race of the patient and donor.

Keep in mind

Each person is different. Ask your doctor about the possible benefits and harms of transplant and other treatments. There are medicines that can help GVHD.

Learn more about

- [Cord blood donation](https://www.nmdp.org) at NMDP.org
- [Clinical trials of cord blood transplant](https://www.ctsearchsupport.org) at CTsearchsupport.org
- More [study summaries](https://www.cibmtr.org) at CIBMTR.org

Source

Ballen K, Wang T, He N, et al. [Impact of Race and Ethnicity on Outcomes After Umbilical Cord Blood Transplantation](#). *Transplantation and Cellular Therapy*. 2024. Epub 2024/07/22. PubMed PMID: 39033978. doi: 10.1016/j.jtct.2024.07.009.

About this research summary

CIBMTR thanks study participants. This information is provided on behalf of the Consumer Advocacy Committee of CIBMTR® (Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research®). CIBMTR is a research collaboration between the Medical College of Wisconsin and NMDP.

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