

Parent's Guide to Delayed Cord Clamping



What is Delayed Cord Clamping?

After a baby is born, the umbilical cord is clamped and cut. Some parents leave the umbilical cord attached for a certain amount of time prior to clamping, allowing more time for the umbilical cord blood to flow to their baby.

While opinions on optimal timing vary, it's always recommended to consult with your healthcare provider about your family's specific situation.



Parent's Guide
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What do professional societies say about delayed cord clamping?

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends 30-60 seconds of delayed cord clamping for full-term babies.¹ Immediate benefits of delayed cord clamping for these babies include increases in blood volume and iron levels, while the long-term benefits are still under investigation.²

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends at least 60-second delayed cord clamping for all babies, to compensate for varying levels of nutrition around the world.³

Can I have delayed cord clamping and still bank cord blood?

Yes. One study from the New York Blood Center, the largest donor bank in the U.S., indicates that delayed cord clamping of 30-60 seconds does not significantly diminish the cell count of cord blood collected for cryopreservation at a public cord blood bank.⁴

However, the longer a family delays before clamping, the less blood will be available to collect. There's no way to know the exact volume in advance, as each baby is unique. Compared to donor banks, family banks are more flexible when it comes to preserving a wider range of volumes.

Families can also preserve cord tissue — which is unaffected by delayed cord clamping.



How do I combine delayed cord clamping with cord blood donation?

Families who have arranged to donate to a public bank should ask if the donation facility has any policy on delayed cord clamping. In some cases, it may not be possible to donate after delayed cord clamping because many donation programs require larger sample volumes. Please note that in most cases, families must arrange for donation by 32 weeks. For more information on options in your area, visit www.bethematch.org.

If you plan to donate, we recommend consulting with your healthcare provider to determine the best timing for your specific situation.

If my baby is premature, should I still consider cord blood banking?

Both delayed cord clamping and cord blood banking have heightened importance for premature babies.

On the one hand, delayed cord clamping has clear benefits in preventing complications for infants born before 34 weeks of pregnancy.⁵

On the other hand, research has shown that the concentration of stem cells is higher in the cord blood of premature babies⁶, so even a small amount of cord blood collected from these babies could be of therapeutic value.

You'll need to speak to your healthcare provider about your specific situation and what's best for your baby.

What is the optimal delayed cord clamping time for parents choosing to bank cord blood?

The optimal timing is a topic of ongoing research.⁴ You'll want to make sure to speak to your healthcare provider. Each mom and baby are unique, so your healthcare provider will help you figure out what's best for your family.

For more information, visit
ParentsGuideCordClamping.org



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