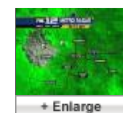


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## Umbilical Cord Blood May Help Diabetics



Content courtesy of Ivanhoe

Nearly three million children and adults in this country live with type 1 diabetes; a disease that will shorten their lifespan and put them at risk for kidney failure, blindness and [heart disease](#). A medical first may come from umbilical cord blood.

Nothing stops 11-year-old Barrett Ross from playing his favorite sport, football ... not even having type 1 [diabetes](#).

"I'm just like a regular kid," he told Ivanhoe "I just get a couple more shots and a couple more pricks than other kids."

"It is very exciting," Desmond Schatz, M.D., a pediatric endocrinologist at The University of Florida in Gainesville, said. "I take care of children with diabetes all the time. I know what it is that they go through."

Barrett used to take 30 units of insulin a day. After the infusion he needs less than 10, and after two years of diabetes, his body is still producing some insulin.

"The results that we have experienced as a result of this study, in my mind are staggering," Brian Ross, Barrett's dad, said.

It's just one more way Barrett proves nothing can slow him down.

"Diabetes can't stop you from anything," Barrett declared.

Researchers hope cord blood infusions could one day become part of a standard treatment plan for kids with type 1 diabetes. A decade ago, less than one percent of Americans banked cord blood. Today that figure has grown to about four percent. All parents have the option of banking a newborn's cord blood, but it can cost up to \$2,000 up front and about \$100 a year to store it.

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Barrett gives himself insulin shots and pricks his finger up to eight times a day. He also carefully monitors everything he eats. When Barrett was first diagnosed, his parents enrolled him in a clinical trial testing umbilical cord blood infusions.

"I contacted them immediately through e-mail and told them that Barrett was diagnosed within the last 24 hours and that we had saved cord blood," Christine Ross, Barrett's mom, recalled.

When parents choose to bank their newborn's umbilical cord blood, it can later be used for research. At the University of Florida, 20 children were given a one-time infusion of their own cord blood. Researchers say stem cells in the blood may slow the immune attack of diabetes so the pancreas destroys fewer "good" cells that produce insulin. Some of the kids who had the infusion required less insulin and had better blood sugar control.

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