

## Cord Blood Transplant

Posted By: Michelle Jacobs ■ 16 hrs ago

NEW YORK -- Karol LaBarrie of Brooklyn, New York looks just like any other seven-year-old, but his young life has been filled with more than 40 hospital stays.

He was diagnosed sickle cell disease when he was six weeks old.

He started having symptoms of swelling and pain when he was just three months old.

In 2004 he became a big brother and his mother Carol LaBarrie had the cells from her new baby's umbilical cord blood stored in hopes they might be able to help Kerol one day.

That time came a couple years later.

Kerol received an infusion of brother Kequan's cord blood cells.

He's had some set backs but now appears to be doing fine.

"If you look in his blood, there's no evidence, when you test it, it's all his brother's blood, so he is completely cured at this point," said Dr. Monica Bhatia.

His story is just one example.

"There are, I believe, close to a hundred diseases that are treatable with stem cell transplantation today. Principally cancers and inherited diseases such as metabolic abnormalities, inherited anemias, acquired and inherited immune abnormalities," noted Dr. Robert Hariri of LifebankUSA. "We believe in the very near future in broader applications like treating neurologic injury, cardiac injury and so on."

Researchers are working on ways to reprogram these cells to develop into other tissue, but say that's at least five years away.

In the meantime, at least one company, is now collecting and storing the placenta.

"The theory here is that if we can combine from the same donor, if you will, very very, very early stem cells with early stem cells from the cord blood that we're going to get a greater improvement and outcome by using these two together," explained pediatric Hematologist and Oncologist Dr. Mitchell Cairo.

WNBC

