

Foals' umbilical cords can be banked for future stem-cell treatments

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Horse owners now have the opportunity to collect umbilical cord tissue immediately after a foal is born and save it as a future source of therapeutic stem cells through the Regenerative Medicine Laboratory at UC Davis' School of Veterinary Medicine.

The laboratory provides kits that enable the horse's owner or veterinarian to easily collect the umbilical cord tissue and send it to the UC Davis laboratory, where it will be minimally processed. One dose of [stem cells](#) will be sent back to the horse owner's veterinarian, and another sample will be frozen and stored for as long as four years.

If the horse should later need stem cell therapy to treat an injury or the

effects of disease, the tissue sample can be retrieved from the frozen archive and treated to encourage growth of the stem cells. Within just two weeks, sufficient cells would be available for a treatment. The method is modeled after procedures currently used in human medicine to collect and bank babies' cord blood for potential use in cell-based therapies.

“The advantage is that, unlike collecting stem cells derived from bone marrow or fat, [umbilical cord](#) banking doesn't require the horse to undergo a traumatic or invasive procedure,” said Sean Owens, medical director of the [Regenerative Medicine](#) Laboratory.

He also noted that each cord tissue sample could be expanded as needed, such as at the beginning of rigorous training, so that cell doses could be ready for injection within a few days of an injury.

The cost for the collection kit and four years of storage is \$1,625.

More information: More information or cord-tissue collection kits may be obtained from the Regenerative Medicine Laboratory at (530) 754-0400 or regenlab@ucdavis.edu

Provided by UC Davis

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