What is umbilical cord blood?
Umbilical cord blood is the blood that remains in the placenta after a baby is delivered and the umbilical cord is cut. This cord blood is often discarded with the placenta following the birth of a baby.

Why is cord blood needed?
Stem cells, the parent cells of blood and immune cells, are present in high amounts in cord blood. These stem cells have the ability to become mature cells of the blood and immune system. These stem cells can be used to treat children and adults with some types of cancer and other diseases affecting the blood and immune systems.

Private versus public cord banking
Private banking is donating and storing the cord blood for personal use. There are multiple private cord blood banks that store for a fee. This is currently recommended only if there is an immediate sibling with a diagnosis of cancer or a disease known to be treated with blood stem cell transplantation. Public banking is free of cost to the donor. Cord blood units stored in public blood banks have been used to treat thousands of patients worldwide since 1988. As the number of cord blood transplants increases there is a higher need to expand the donor pool in public banks, and to do research of methods to improve the collection, storage and use of cord blood units.

How can I donate cord blood and what does it take to be a donor?
Almost any healthy woman delivering at Oregon Health and Science University is eligible to donate her baby's cord blood. Prior to your delivery, you should contact the Cord Blood Program to register for donation.
- You will have a health screening questionnaire to determine if you are eligible to donate. This can be done by phone, in person or mailed back to us.
- You will be asked to read and sign a consent form to be a cord donor.
- When you go into labor and are admitted to the hospital, a blood sample (2-3 tablespoons) will be collected from your arm vein to test for transmissible diseases.
- The cord blood collection is done after the baby is delivered. About 2-3 ounces of blood are drawn directly from the cord portion that is attached to the placenta and collected into a special bag. The process takes about 5 minutes and is completely harmless and painless to the mother or baby. The labor and delivery nurses and physicians perform the collection procedure, so no additional people need to come into the birthing environment. The cord blood unit is shipped to the public cord blood bank for processing and storage. The bank is the Puget Sound Blood Center in Seattle, WA.
- You will be asked to complete a short questionnaire after the donation. You will be asked how satisfied you were with the collection process and with being a donor.

Who should I contact to be a cord blood donor?
You can sign up to be a donor by calling the Cord Blood Program at (503) 494-7187 or on-line at: http://www.ohsu.edu/health/cordblood