



BEZCENNY DAR
KAMPANIA EDUKACYJNA
NA RZECZ KOMÓREK MACIERZYSTYCH Z KRWI PĘPOWINKOWEJ



Polski Bank
Komórek Macierzystych S.A.

A story of 12-year-old Dominika cured thanks to her brother's umbilical cord blood

From the day of her birth Dominika had problems with health. One day after she was born she had the first operation connected with incorrect structure of her alimentary track. Then a cardiac effect was diagnosed. When she was three she suffered from continuous vomiting and diarrhea. Then doctors diagnosed trombocytopenia – a disease in which lack of blood platelets occurs. For a few years the girl had to have transfusions – first once a month, then once every two weeks. In the summer her condition usually got worse, her organism's resistance decreased and the number of blood platelets reduced. Then doctors made punctures, which luckily did not show any abnormality that would be a sign of a tumour.

Dominika developed normally, she could play with other children, go to school and devote time to her hobby, for example horse riding. Nevertheless, the older she got, the longer her absences at school were. Doctors were afraid that the girl might get seriously ill. The danger increased when Dominika's medical test results got worse. Mrs. Dorota, the girl's mother decided to look for help with other specialists. The analysis of medical tests in Warsaw showed that Dominika was suffering from Franconi anemia. That diagnosis was much more worrying as the disease increases the risk of a tumour.

The diagnosis was confirmed by more tests and soon a search for a bone marrow donor for the sick girl began. During one year and a half a few people who could be potential donors were found, but each time a tissue compatibility test was done, it turned out that the donors were not suitable. That time Dominika's parents decided to have another child. When the girl's mother was in advanced pregnancy and she was visiting her daughter in the hospital, she came across a leaflet of the Polish Stem Cell Bank (PSCB) which deals with collecting and storing umbilical cord blood. Mrs. Dorota had never heard about such a possibility before so she made an appointment with the Bank's consultant, who told her about the whole process and explained all the doubts. Mrs. Dorota decided to have umbilical cord blood of her child collected.

Although a suitable donor was finally found before birth giving, the doctors decided to wait before taking the decision about the transplant. They wanted to check if umbilical cord blood collected during the birth would be compatible with Dominika's blood. The specialists claim that a sibling's blood is better for a transplant than a stranger's blood because the risk of the transplant rejection and complications is much smaller.

Warszawa, 31 maja 2011 r.



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In January 2010 Kacper was born. Everybody was relieved when it turned out that stem cells from collected umbilical cord blood could be transplanted to Dominika. Due to the fact that the girl was 11 years old the doctors decided to wait one more year for the transplant of cells from the bone marrow and umbilical cord blood of her younger brother.

With admirable patience and resistance Dominika waited for the transplantation. Mrs. Dorota recalls her brave decision to shave her head and get rid of her precious hair:

- Till then Dominika allowed to cut her long hair only a few centimeters, but just before the transplant she did not protest at all. She knew it was necessary and she accepted shaving her head with dignity.

According to the procedures connected with the transplant, Dominika was treated by intensive chemotherapy, whose aim was to destroy ill cells of bone marrow and in consequence to destroy the immunological system. The girl had to stay in a sterile isolation ward, where only doctors and the closest members of the family could enter after having maintained the highest safety standards – they had to wear special masks, aprons and protectors. Any kind of infection could be a danger for the girl's life.

The transplant was performed one year after Kacper was born in the Clinic of Pediatric Bone Marrow Transplantation, Oncology and Hematology at Wrocław Medical University. It was a big event for the hospital's staff. A lot of employees were interested in that case because transplants of umbilical cord blood stem cells are not a method of treatment often used in Poland although in the Western countries it is a routine medical procedure. This situation is the result of a small number of stored unites of umbilical cord blood in our country.

One month and a half after the transplant Dominika's medical test results were so good that she could leave the hospital. As doctors emphasize, coming back home is a factor that often increases the motivation to fight the disease and speeds up the process of recovery. It was exactly what happened in that case. Day after day the effects of the treatment were more and more satisfactory and the girl could come back to her normal life; she could for example visit a friend or go out. At the moment Dominika feels excellent and she can ride a bike, rollerskate and even go to the swimming pool. The time of illness has come to an end and the time of making her wishes come true has begun.

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