

## Aishwarya Rai Bachchan advocates stem cell banking

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LifeCell, India's largest and most accredited stem cell banking company announced the launch of world's most affordable stem cell banking solution. Umbilical cord blood stem cells have been used for over 25 years for more than 30,000 successful transplants world over. This announcement coincided with the global observance of the 25th anniversary year of stem cell treatments using umbilical cord blood. Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, a patron of LifeCell and goodwill ambassador for stem cell banking reinforced the value of stem cell banking on the occasion and stated this as the best gift parents can give for their child.

With over a lakh of children's stem cells banked in India, the private stem cell banking industry in India stands at Rs. 200 crores, and is estimated to touch Rs. 2700 crores by 2020, accounting for 17 percent of the world's market. More and more parents are recognizing the importance of banking their child's umbilical cord blood in the event that their child needs a lifesaving transplant treatment in the future.

Mayur Abhaya, Managing Director & CEO, LifeCell said "At LifeCell, we understand the importance of educating expectant parents about the value of umbilical cord banking and are committed to reaching out to maximum number of families. We are proud to celebrate 25 lifesaving years of umbilical cord transplant globally by offering parents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to bank their baby's cord blood at the most affordable prices. We currently have over 80,000 customers in India who have preserved their baby's stem cells with us and we see this growing many fold over the next few years aided by awareness and

affordability, thereby potentially making us from India's largest stem cell bank to the world's largest stem cell bank.

Umbilical Cord Banking is becoming increasingly popular for expecting parents as a unique form of insurance since it provides them the assurance about their child's safe, healthy and secure future. As a Patron of LifeCell and Goodwill Ambassador for Stem Cell Banking, Aishwarya Rai said "It is a privilege to educate expectant parents on the significance of banking umbilical cord stem cells since it can secure your baby's future health against many serious medical conditions. Also advancing stem cell research would only increase the benefits".

At the time of Aaradhya's birth, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan opted for banking her daughter's stem cells with LifeCell owing to its efficient facilities, trust and values. She added "The most important role in my life is that of being a mother. Choosing to bank our baby's umbilical cord stem cells with LifeCell is a treasured gift that will stay with her for life and is an investment for her healthy future. LifeCell's dual storage, comprehensive insurance packages for total security and complete stem cell service solutions including research and therapy gives me confidence that it is the world's most accredited stem cell bank."

Some other celebrities who have chosen LifeCell for their children include Hrithik & Suzanne Roshan, Raveena Tandon & Anil, Manyata & Sanjay Dutt and Madhavan apart from many others.

Umbilical cord has been the number one source of stem cells for treatment of children in US & Japan and umbilical cord banking is regarded as an essential service globally. In 2005, there were less than 25 stem cell banks worldwide, but now in 2013, there are approximately 500 banks globally with one bank in almost every major country. LifeCell is the first company to bring the revolutionary concept of umbilical cord stem cell banking to India in 2004 in technological collaboration with Cryo-Cell International. Since then, LifeCell has been a leading cord blood bank providing transplant quality stem cells that can be used in thousands of successful treatments. Laws have been enacted in US to create awareness on cord blood banking, and financial aid is provided in countries like Singapore. India lags behind world indicators significantly with extremely low public cord blood units and lack of bone marrow donors. Therefore, there is a dire need to address both awareness and affordability to increase adoption of stem cell banking.