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STEM CELLS

Dental Stem Cells

What if you were able to take the young teeth that your children naturally lose as their adult teeth are growing in, and save them so that when your child grows into an adult, they are able to use the cells from those young teeth to possibly help them fight things like cancer later in life?

The good news is you actually can! Today, banking dental stem cells is a possibility thanks to a number of organizations that have the technology to do just that.

However, you may still have a lot of questions -- what exactly are stem cells? And how does all this work? Below we answer some of your questions, and guide you to resources to find others.

What Are Stem Cells?

Stem cells are a very unique type of cell in that they are "unspecialized." This means that they really aren't a specific type of cell -- they're not brain cells or liver cells or skin cells. They're just cells that when applied properly, have the ability to turn into whatever type of cell you need. So, for instance, if you need more bone marrow cells to help combat a disease, a doctor would apply stem cells there and they would do the job of bone marrow cells.

Normally stem cells are harvested from embryos and are then called embryonic stem cells. Stem cells can also be adult stem cells. The stem cells harvested from teeth are called mesenchymal stem cells, which can also be found in a baby's umbilical cord tissue and blood

Why Teeth?

You may still be wondering why teeth – what makes them such a great place to harvest stem cells?

That's because there just happens to be a large quantity of these mesenchymal stem cells in young teeth. They are found in the soft tissue center of teeth called the pulp. Tooth enamel is very hard and really acts as a natural protector to keep the pulp safe. Plus these young teeth fall out on their own, which makes collecting them extremely easy and non-invasive.

There has also been research done on harvesting stem cells from extracted wisdom teeth as well.

What Can Be Done With Dental Stem Cells?

Much research is going on right now regarding the future possibilities of using harvested dental stem cells.

For example, a recent study in Australia has found that when dental stem cells grow, they take on the characteristics of brain cells. Researchers say this type of discovery has the potential to help patients dealing with neurological issues from strokes.

Another study by doctors at the College of Dental Medicine in Nova Southeastern University are using dental stem cells to grow new teeth to use as replacements.

Additionally, researchers have found that the stem cells in teeth have the possibility of helping to treat a number of conditions, including Type 1 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, repair bone joints, and liver disease.

How Do I Learn More About Dental Stem Cell Harvesting?

Below are a few resources for more information on harvesting dental stem cells. Also ask your dentist about places they may recommend or be currently working with.

Store-A-Tooth
781-862-0700
www.store-a-tooth.com

StemSave
877-783-6728
www.stemsave.com

