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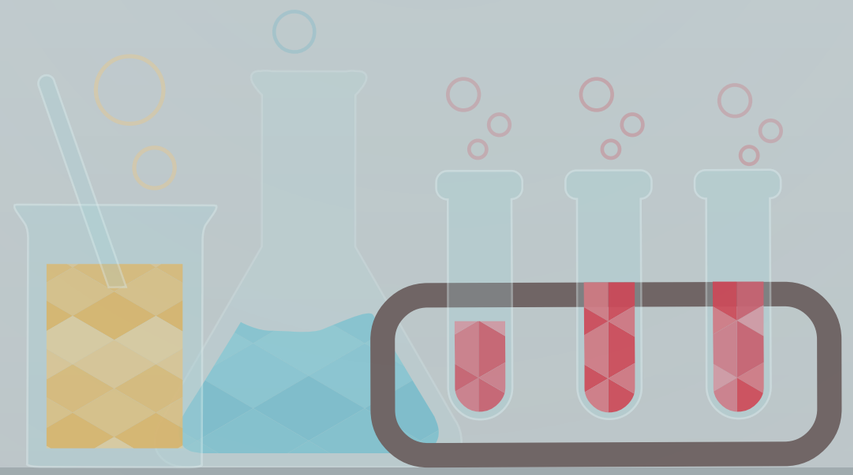
Caring for Colton

From Colorado to the Aflac Cancer Center

At the Aflac Cancer & Blood Disorders Center, we are making big strides in the fight against pediatric cancer. The weapon? Our patients' very own immune systems. In January, Children's was named as one of the collaborative institutions for an international clinical trial analyzing the safety and effectiveness of an investigative cellular therapy treatment. The trial is part of a collaborative international study sponsored by Novartis, a global healthcare company.

The Aflac Cancer & Blood Disorders Center is one of 20 centers worldwide—and the only center in the Southeast—chosen to participate.

"This is not only a nod to The Aflac Cancer Center's excellence of clinical care and our tremendous cancer program, but also to our Developmental and Cellular Therapeutics programs," said Cynthia Wetmore, M.D., Ph.D., Director of the Developmental Therapeutics Program at the Aflac Cancer & Blood Disorders Center and Associate Professor at the Department of Pediatrics at Emory University School of Medicine. "We are bringing new therapies to pediatric patients that you can't get at many other centers."



Here's how the therapy treatment—called chimeric antigen receptor T-cell (or CAR-T) technology—works:

Immune cells, or T-cells, are removed from the patient and reprogrammed to become CTL019 molecularly targeted cells, which target specific proteins on cancer cells. Millions of these reprogrammed CTL019 cells are grown before they are re-infused into the patient through a process very similar to a blood transfusion. Once they are infused back into the patients, the cells have one purpose: to seek out and destroy the cancer.

And, though still early in our trials, we are already seeing promising results. Seven-year-old Colton Hunt is the first patient to participate in our trial at Children's. Colton was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) on October 29, 2011—just three days after this third birthday. He and his family, who live in Denver, have spent the last four years traveling to hospitals across the country seeking treatment. He has undergone multiple rounds of chemotherapy. He has participated in an alternative drug trial. And, last year, he had a bone marrow transplant.

None of these treatments worked. Time after time, Colton's cancer came back.

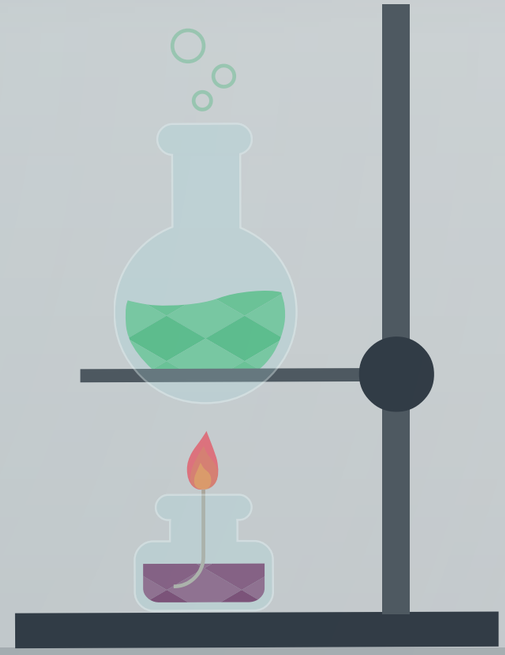
"Any parent who has been down this road knows how devastating it is to hear the words 'your child has cancer,'" said Brad Hunt, Colton's father. "We have now heard it three times."

With the CAR-T therapy treatment, Brad and his wife Kim hope they have finally found the right weapon to defeat their son's cancer.

"Most of the patients in the study are therapy-resistant and have no other traditional methods left to help them," said Dr. Wetmore. "Immunotherapy is an exciting new investigational frontier in cancer treatment that is giving hope to many people."

And, with Colton now in remission since his CTL019 cell infusion on December 17, 2015, hopeful is exactly how Brad and his family feel.

"We remain hopeful that this is a punch his cancer didn't see coming," Brad said. "A punch that will—once and for all—get this disease out of our son's body."



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