

Steps of Marrow and Blood Cell Donation



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Join the Registry. Volunteers must be between the ages of 18 – 60 and meet the health guidelines. Volunteers should be committed to helping any patient. To join, you complete a short health questionnaire and sign a form stating that you understand what it means to be listed on the Registry. Then, a small blood sample or swab of cheek cells is taken to find your tissue type. This information is added to the Registry.

2

Stay committed and available. Doctors search the Registry to find a donor whose tissue type matches their patient's. If you are chosen, your donor center will contact you. If you agree, more testing will be scheduled.

3

Attend an information session. You will meet with staff from your donor center to learn about the donation process, risks and side effects. You are free to bring a friend or family member. You will also be told which source of blood-forming cells is being requested — either collected from the marrow or from the circulating blood (known as a PBSC donation). You will then decide whether or not to donate.

4

Receive a physical exam. If you agree to donate, you will be given a physical exam to discover if donating would pose any special risks to you or the patient.



Marrow Donation



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Marrow donation is a surgical procedure. While you receive anesthesia, doctors use special, hollow needles to withdraw liquid marrow from the back of your pelvic bones. Many donors receive a transfusion of their own previously donated blood.

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Side effects and recovery. You can expect to feel some soreness in your lower back for a few days or longer. Most donors are back to their normal routine in a few days. Your marrow is completely replaced within four to six weeks.

7

Follow-up. Your NMDP donor center coordinator will follow up with you until you are able to resume normal activity. You will also receive annual calls for long-term follow-up.

PBSC Donation



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PBSC donation takes place at an apheresis center. To increase the number of blood-forming cells in the bloodstream, donors receive daily injections of a drug called filgrastim for five days before the collection. Your blood is then removed through a sterile needle in one arm and passed through a machine that separates out the blood-forming cells. The remaining blood is returned to you through the other arm.

6

Side effects and recovery. You may experience headache, or bone or muscle aches for several days before collection. This is a side effect of the filgrastim injections that you received to increase the number of blood-forming cells in the bloodstream. These effects disappear shortly after the collection.

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Follow-up. Your NMDP donor center coordinator will follow up with you until you are able to resume normal activity. You will also receive annual calls for long-term follow-up.