

# What happens next? Information for stem cell donors

Bone Marrow Transplant  
Information for donors

Produced: Jan 2026  
Review: Jan 2029  
Leaflet number: 641 Version: 7

## Important dates

Initial appointment

.....

Date to start G-CSF (as appropriate)

.....

Date to attend for stem cell collection

.....

---

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.uhleicester.nhs.uk](http://www.uhleicester.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [uhl-tr.informationforpatients@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.informationforpatients@nhs.net)

## **Introduction**

Tissue typing has shown that you are a suitable match to donate stem cells to your sibling.

At your first appointment the Transplant Team will be assessing your general health and ensuring that you understand what being a donor means. This appointment is an opportunity for you to ask any questions that you may have.

You will be at the hospital for most of the day.

## **What happens at this appointment?**

The transplant consultant will see you on your own to make sure that you are fully aware of the implications of becoming a donor and that you are happy to proceed. Although you may bring someone to the hospital with you, they will not be allowed into this part of the consultation.

It is your personal decision whether or not to proceed with the donation of cells.

During the day, the doctors and nurses will be carrying out a full assessment of your health. This will include a physical examination by the doctor and further blood tests. Blood will be taken to screen for viruses, including HIV. Testing for HIV requires consent, and the doctor will discuss this with you prior to testing. Female donors may require a pregnancy test.

You may be required to have a chest X-ray and possibly a tracing of your heart called an ECG.

Sometimes the tests can give results that need further investigation. Certain results may mean that you are not suitable to be a donor. If this is the case, we will explain this to you and advise you on what happens next.

Once it has been decided that you can proceed as a donor, your consultant will discuss with you the process of stem cell collection (also called stem cell harvest).

The transplant team will decide a timetable so that the cells are available on the day they are needed. This will be written on the plan on the front of this booklet.

If you become unwell, develop a cold or another health problem before your donation please contact us urgently for advice, using the telephone numbers in this booklet.

## Stem cell donation

Before you consent to the procedure, the doctor will explain the possible side effects to you. The G-CSF injections (see below) can cause bone pain, muscle aches, headache, tiredness and nausea.

Before you donate, you will need to have four or five daily injections of a growth factor called G-CSF. G-CSF helps the stem cells to leave the bone marrow where they are made, and circulate in the blood stream. This makes it possible for us to then collect the stem cells. You will be given a separate leaflet about G-CSF.

The G-CSF injections will be given at home, and it may be possible for you to give these injections yourself. Otherwise, we will arrange for a nurse to visit you at home to give the injections.

Stem cell collection is carried out using a cell-separating machine. The machine takes blood out of a vein, spins it in a centrifuge to separate the components and collects the stem cells into a bag. The remaining blood is then returned to you via a different vein.

The stem cell collection will take up to four hours and needs good access to two different veins (usually one in each arm). You should expect to come for this procedure on two consecutive days, in order for us to obtain adequate numbers of cells for the transplant.

Most people do not feel unwell during or after the procedure, but you should arrange for a responsible adult to take you home in a car or taxi. You should expect to be at the hospital for most of the day. We advise that you wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing.



Possible side effects during the procedure include:

- headache
- a tingling sensation in your fingers or lips (caused by a low level of calcium in your blood)
- pain at the site of the needles

## Longer term effects

There should be no physical side effects in the longer term, but some donors find it difficult to watch their sibling's progress after the transplant, particularly if there are problems. If you are having trouble coping with your feelings, please speak to one of the Transplant Team who will refer you for support.

You will be assigned a bone marrow transplant clinical nurse specialist (CNS). Their phone number is listed in the 'contact' section of this leaflet.

Your CNS will provide a follow up service which includes phone calls at 7 days, 6 months and 1 year post stem cell donation. This will give you the opportunity to discuss any problems or worries post donation.

Your CNS can be contacted anytime if you have any worries or concerns both before or after your stem cell donation.

## Frequently asked questions

### Is the collection always successful?

No, in about 1% of donors we cannot obtain enough cells for transplantation to go ahead. If this happens the transplant team will come and discuss with you what happens next.

### When can I go back to work?

You should be well enough to go back to work on the day after donating peripheral blood stem cells.

### Will I be given a follow up appointment?

Yes, we will ring you about four weeks after the donation to do a telephone consultation to make sure that you are well. However, please contact us if you have any questions or concerns before that time, using the numbers below.

## Regulation of transplantation

Transplantation is a carefully regulated process, and all transplant units must be licensed by the Human Tissue Authority (HTA). Further information is available on the HTA website:

[www.hta.gov.uk](http://www.hta.gov.uk)

## Contact numbers

If you have any questions at any time during the whole process, please phone us:

### Leicester Royal Infirmary

#### Hambleton Suite

Telephone: 0116 258 5124 Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm

#### Osborne Day Care

Telephone: 0116 258 5263 Monday to Friday, 8.30am - 6pm, Saturday 8.30am - 4.30pm

#### Bone Marrow Transplant Unit

Tel: 0116 258 5698 24 hours, 7 days a week

#### Bone Marrow Transplant CNS

Telephone: 0777 366 7334

## Sources of further information

### Anthony Nolan

The Anthony Nolan website has videos about donating stem cells and bone marrow. You may find it helpful to watch these before you donate. Website: [www.anthonynolan.org](http://www.anthonynolan.org)

### Macmillan Cancer Support

Freephone: 0808 808 00 00 Website: [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

### Bloodwise

Telephone: 0808 2080 888 Website: [www.bloodwise.org.uk](http://www.bloodwise.org.uk)

### Lymphoma Action

Telephone: 0808 808 5555 Website: [www.lymphoma-action.org.uk](http://www.lymphoma-action.org.uk)

### Leukaemia Care

Tel: 08088 010 444 (24 hours) Website: [www.leukaemiacare.org.uk](http://www.leukaemiacare.org.uk)

### Myeloma UK

Myeloma Infoline: 0800 980 3332 Website: [www.myeloma.org.uk](http://www.myeloma.org.uk)

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل  
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।  
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email [uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net)