



CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

Bone Marrow Transplant: What to Expect at Home

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

In a bone marrow transplant, healthy stem cells are placed in your body to help your bone marrow start to work right.

If the stem cells came from your own blood or bone marrow (autologous transplant), you may be able to receive part or even all of your treatment in an outpatient clinic. If you need to be in a hospital, you will not usually have to stay longer than 3 weeks.

If the stem cells came from another person (allogeneic transplant), you may spend 4 weeks or longer in the hospital. About 1 out of 4 people need to be readmitted within the first 3 months because of problems that may occur.

When you receive someone else's bone marrow, you need treatment with medicines to prevent your immune system from attacking the donor marrow. You may also take medicine to help prevent the donor cells from attacking your body. Most people who do not have an immune system reaction take these medicines for 2 to 6 months.

Problems from a stem cell transplant may include nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, mouth sores, hair loss, bleeding, and infection, such as pneumonia. A severe, often life-threatening infection can develop after a stem cell transplant. You will need to take antibiotics for several months to prevent infection.

This care sheet gives you a general idea about how long it will take for you to recover. But each person recovers at a different pace. Follow the steps below to feel better as quickly as possible.

How can you care for yourself at home?

Activity

- Rest when you feel tired. Getting enough sleep will help you recover.
- Try to walk each day. Start by walking a little more than you did the day before. Bit by bit, increase the amount you walk. Walking boosts blood flow and helps prevent pneumonia and constipation.
- Avoid strenuous activities, such as bicycle riding, jogging, weight lifting, or aerobic exercise, until your doctor says it is okay.

Diet

- You can eat your normal diet. If your stomach is upset, try bland, low-fat foods like plain rice, broiled chicken, toast, and yogurt.

Medicines

- Your doctor will tell you if and when you can restart your medicines. He or she will also give you instructions about taking any new medicines.
- If you take blood thinners, such as warfarin (Coumadin), clopidogrel (Plavix), or aspirin, be sure to talk to your doctor. He or she will tell you if and when to start taking those medicines again. Make sure that you understand exactly what your doctor wants you to do.
- Take pain medicines exactly as directed.
 - If the doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed.
 - If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter medicine.
- If you think your pain medicine is making you sick to your stomach:
 - Take your medicine after meals (unless your doctor has told you not to).
 - Ask your doctor for a different pain medicine.
- If your doctor prescribed antibiotics, take them as directed. Do not stop taking them just because you feel better. You need to take the full course of antibiotics.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

When should you call for help?

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You passed out (lost consciousness).
- You have severe trouble breathing.
- You have sudden chest pain and shortness of breath, or you cough up blood.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have pain that does not get better after you take pain medicine.
- You have signs of infection, such as:
 - Increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness.
 - Red streaks leading from the incision.
 - Pus draining from the incision.
 - Swollen lymph nodes in your neck, armpits, or groin.
 - A fever.
- You are short of breath.
- You have new or severe pain.
- You have chills, a fever, or a cough.
- Your symptoms, such as nausea or feeling tired, get worse.
- Your stools are black and tarlike or have streaks of blood.
- You have severe diarrhea that is not getting better.
- You have unusual bruising or bleeding.
- Your pain is not controlled with your medicine.
- You are dizzy or lightheaded, or you feel like you may faint.
- You get a skin rash.
- Your skin turns yellow (jaundice).

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if you have any problems.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.kp.org>

Bone Marrow Transplant: What to Expect at Home (Page 4 of 4)

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