

Financial Planning Before a Blood or Marrow Transplant (BMT)

There is a lot to think about when you plan for a blood or marrow transplant (BMT), including how to pay for it and related costs. You can be better prepared by planning early, learning about your income and expenses, and taking advantage of available financial help.

This fact sheet **tells you:**

- How to start a spending plan
- Tips to manage debt and lower your taxes
- How to get financial help

Spending plans

A spending plan, or budget, may help you organize your money, prepare for unexpected financial changes, and see how you spend your money. Use the attached Budget Worksheets to help you get started. Here are steps to help you make your budget.

1. Learn about your **insurance coverage**

Every health insurance plan is different. Talk to the case manager at your insurance company right away to find out what they will pay for and what you may have to pay. The financial coordinator at your transplant center can also help you. They will talk with you about your health insurance and finances. They can also talk to your insurance company, on your behalf, to help you understand your coverage and help you arrange for payment for your transplant.

Here are some questions to ask your transplant center's financial coordinator:

- How can I break the cost into payments?
- What is the amount of each payment?
- When is each payment due?
- Will interest be added to my balance?

2. Take your **financial inventory**

A financial inventory is a list of your assets (what you own) and your liabilities (what you owe). If you subtract your liabilities from your assets, you will know your net worth. Use the attached Assets and Liabilities Worksheet to help you estimate how much money you could access, if needed.

3. Figure out your **out-of-pocket costs**

Out-of-pocket costs are the expenses your insurance company doesn't pay that you must pay on your own. Your out-of-pocket costs may be directly related to your transplant, like co-pays for doctor's visits. Or, they can be indirectly related to your transplant, like travel costs and temporary housing near the transplant center.

Use the information about your insurance coverage to estimate your out-of-pocket costs for the transplant. The Indirect Transplant Costs Worksheet can help you get started.

The financial coordinator at your transplant center will help you plan for costs insurance doesn't cover and find other financial resources that may be available.

Tips to **have more control over debt**

Many people have changes in their income and spending after transplant. If you're in debt, there are things you can do to have more control of your money. Here are some tips to help you manage your expenses and lower your debt.

1. Lower your **monthly payments**

Call your creditors (the people you owe money) and explain your situation. Many creditors will work with you to agree on lower, more manageable monthly payments.

If you need help talking to creditors about lowering your payments, call a nonprofit consumer credit counseling service. These organizations can help you set a budget and work with your creditors to come up with a payment plan. Call 1 (800) 388-2227 or visit the National Foundation for Credit Counseling at nfcc.org for more information.

2. Lower your **monthly spending**

Look for areas in your budget where you can spend less and save money. Remember, your health insurance, rent or mortgage, utilities and taxes are the most important bills to pay each month.

3. Ask for **disability waivers**

You may also get disability waivers for major loans like a home mortgage, car loan and credit cards. These waivers may give you a break from your monthly payments while you can't work during your recovery. Ask your transplant center financial coordinator or social worker for help on how to ask for a waiver.

4. Explore **insurance and disability programs**

Your transplant center's financial coordinator or social worker can help you learn about programs such as:

- **Long-term care insurance.** This pays for care in a long-term care facility.
- **Disability programs.** These include short-term and long-term work-related coverage and Social Security Disability Insurance. They pay some of your income if you're not able to work.
- **Mortgage insurance.** This protects the lender, or bank, if you can't pay your mortgage. Your mortgage insurance company could help you change your home loan so you can have a lower monthly payment.

Taxes

You may be able to save money on your taxes by claiming the medical expense deduction. If you file an itemized tax return, you can take away medical expenses that are more than a certain percentage of your income. Talk to a financial planner or accountant about your records and what is tax-deductible. Here are some tips to help:

1. Keep track of **receipts**

Keep track of prescriptions and receipts. Ask your doctor to write a prescription for medicines, wheelchairs or any special equipment that you need. When prescribed by your doctor, these items are generally tax deductible.

Here are some things you should save:

- Bills and receipts for medicines
- Receipts for parking fees, gas, and bus or subway fare for doctor's visits
- Mileage driven to and from the doctor's office
- Hotel bills, if the stay is for medical care
- Receipts for wheelchairs or any special equipment that you need

2. Contact the **Internal Revenue Service (IRS)**

The IRS *Publication 502* provides more information about what qualifies for income deduction. Order a free copy of the form by calling (800) 829-1040, or download a copy from [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov) (click on “Forms & Instructions”).

Get financial help

Be The Match® can help you pay for medical and other expenses during transplant like:

- Searching for a donor
- Housing costs
- Copays
- Travel to clinical trials

Applications must be submitted by someone from your transplant team. They can request an application by visiting [Network.BeTheMatchClinical.org](https://www.network.bethematchclinical.org).

Your transplant center social worker can also help you:

- Find financial aid available through other organizations
- Find out if you qualify for financial aid
- Complete the applications

Resources to learn more

Be The Match has a variety of free resources to help you. Visit [BeTheMatch.org/request](https://www.bethematch.org/request) and choose the resources that best meet your needs.

Here are some you might find helpful:

- **FACT SHEET: *Transplant and Health Insurance***
- **FACT SHEET: *Raising Money to Pay for Transplant***

Assets and liabilities worksheet

Using this table as a guideline, make a list of what you own (your assets). Next, make a list of what you owe (debts or liabilities). Subtract what you owe from what you own to estimate your net worth.

Assets*	Value	Liabilities	Amount Owed
Home	\$	Home mortgage(s)	\$
Car	\$	Car loan balance	\$
Checking account(s)	\$	Credit card debt(s)	\$
Savings account(s)	\$	Other loans	\$
Other investments (mutual funds, stocks, bonds, etc.)	\$	Other debts	\$
Retirement plan(s)	\$	Total liabilities	\$
Life insurance cash values	\$	Net Worth (Assets minus liabilities)	\$
Furniture and artwork	\$		
Jewelry and collections	\$		
Rental property	\$		
Business	\$		
Other	\$		
Total Assets	\$		

*Note: List assets at liquidation value rather than replacement value. Liquidation value is what you can sell the item for. Replacement value is the cost to replace the item with a new one.

Indirect transplant costs worksheet

These costs are indirectly related to transplant. You may have covered some of these with your health insurance company representative. These costs are often large and not usually covered.

Costs	Estimate	Amount covered by insurance
Testing to find a matched donor or cord blood unit	\$	\$
Donor costs	\$	\$
Injections to stimulate cells before collection	\$	\$
Getting cells from the donor or cord blood unit	\$	\$
Harvest/storage fees before transplant	\$	\$
Backup collection of cells	\$	\$
Travel expenses to and from the transplant center	\$	\$
Temporary lodging expenses near the transplant center	\$	\$
Food costs while staying near the transplant center (including eating at the hospital cafeteria)	\$	\$
Parking costs	\$	\$
Wigs, hats, or scarves	\$	\$
Child-care costs	\$	\$
Office visits coverage	\$	\$
Home health care	\$	\$
Mental health care for patient and caregiver	\$	\$
Clinical trials	\$	\$
Sperm/egg storage	\$	\$
Insurance premiums when patient is not working	\$	\$
Prescription co-pays for medicine	\$	\$
Fees to prepare your home after transplant (carpet and drapery cleaning, replacing filters on heaters, air conditioning cleaning)	\$	\$
Other changes for living after transplant	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
Total	\$	\$

Budget worksheets

Patients and caregivers are usually not able to work for some time after transplant. Having a financial plan helps patients, caregivers and families focus on healing.

Use these worksheets to record your household's income and expected costs for 1 month.

Monthly Household Income

Income	Per month
After-tax wages	\$
Tips or bonuses	\$
Child support	\$
Alimony (spousal support)	\$
Unemployment income	\$
Social Security or Supplemental Security Income	\$
Retirement plan(s) (pensions)	\$
Disability insurance payments	\$
Public assistance	\$
Food stamps	\$
Interest/dividends	\$
Other	\$
	\$
	\$
Total Income	\$

Budget worksheets *(continued)*

Next, calculate how much you spend each month. Use this worksheet to list all your monthly household costs. You may have extra medical expenses some months. Update the worksheet each month to include additional medical expenses and other changes in spending.

Monthly Household Costs

Costs	Per Month
Rent or mortgage	\$
Heating/air conditioning and electricity	\$
Water/sewer	\$
Phone/Internet/Cable	\$
Groceries	\$
Medicines (Prescriptions and over-the-counter)	\$
Car payments, insurance, repairs and gas	\$
Other transportation payments (bus fare, taxis, train)	\$
Homeowner's or renter's insurance	\$
Health insurance	\$
Other insurance payments (dental, life or supplemental)	\$
Doctor bills and copays	\$
Dentist bills	\$
Hospital bills	\$
Child care	\$
Loan or credit card payments	\$
Entertainment (eating out, movies, cable, satellite)	\$
Miscellaneous expenses (gifts, classes, vacations)	\$
Savings or IRA contributions	\$
Taxes (other than wage withholdings)	\$
Other (pet care, for example)	\$
Charitable giving or donations	\$
Total Costs	\$

Budget worksheets (continued)

Now, subtract your monthly costs from your monthly income. If your spending is more than your income each month, you will end up with debt.

EXAMPLE A: No debt	
\$3,000	Monthly Income
-\$2,800	Monthly Costs
\$200	Remaining/Debt

EXAMPLE B: Debt	
\$3,000	Monthly Income
-\$3,100	Monthly Costs
\$100	Remaining/Debt

Month: _____	
	Monthly Income
	Monthly Costs
	Remaining/Debt



AT EVERY STEP, WE'RE **HERE TO HELP**

Be The Match has a team dedicated to providing information and support to you before, during, and after transplant. You can contact our Patient Support Center to ask questions you may have about transplant, request professional or peer support, or receive free patient education materials.

CALL: 1 (888) 999-6743 | EMAIL: patientinfo@nmdp.org | WEB: BeTheMatch.org/one-on-one



Every individual's medical situation, transplant experience, and recovery is unique. You should always consult with your own transplant team or family doctor regarding your situation. This information is not intended to replace, and should not replace, a doctor's medical judgment or advice.