

# Preparing for Transplant

If you and your doctor decide that a blood or marrow transplant (BMT) is your best treatment option, you may have many questions. Your transplant center's social worker can help you prepare and offer support.

## THIS FACT SHEET TELLS YOU:

- What to do before transplant
- How to prepare emotionally and financially
- Resources for more support

## WHAT CAN I DO BEFORE MY TRANSPLANT?

- Make a list of important phone numbers and share it with your family. Include names and numbers of your health care team and caregivers.
- Write down important information about finances. Tell your caregiver where you will keep this information.
- Ask your bank what you need to do so your caregiver can do certain transactions for you.
- Plan how your bills will be paid while you are in the hospital and during recovery.
- Ask for help with household chores and other duties in your absence.
- Family and friends will want to know how they can help. Make a list of tasks they can do.
- If you have children, set up schedules and make plans for how they will be cared for while you're away. Tell your children and others involved about the plans you make.
- If you are the only one who can allow medical care for your children, provide a medical release that gives permission to your caregiver or another person you trust. Ask your children's doctor to give you a medical release form.

## HOW CAN I PREPARE EMOTIONALLY?

Talking to someone about what you are going through may be helpful. You may want to:

- Tell your family and friends how you are feeling and how they can support you.
- Talk to other patients who are going through a transplant or who have already had a transplant.
- Let your children know what to expect during and after your treatment.

## HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD PREPARE EMOTIONALLY?

Children express their emotions in different ways. If you are concerned about your child's emotional health during your transplant and recovery, there are different things you can do to help, depending on your child's age:

- Explain to your child what they can expect during your treatment process and encourage them to ask questions.
- Encourage your child to express their feelings, such as through talking, journaling or drawing.
- Tell stories of how you have felt during stressful situations, how you handled it (good or bad) and how it turned out.
- Share feelings and solve problems together. You may want to try creative ways to express feelings like drawing pictures or writing a story.
- All of the ways you normally comfort your child are more important than ever right now. Hold them, give hugs, or offer a hand massage or gentle back rub.
- Tell them how much you love them.

## HOW CAN I PREPARE FINANCIALLY?

Even if you have insurance, some costs may not be paid by your insurance. These may include deductibles, co-payments and housing.

Financial help may be available to help pay for these costs.

- Talk to the financial coordinator at your transplant center. They can talk with you and help you understand your benefits. They may also talk with your insurance company to find out more about your coverage.
- Talk to the social worker at your transplant center. They can help you find financial help and apply for grants through Be The Match and other financial aid programs.

## WHAT ELSE SHOULD I THINK ABOUT?

### Fertility preservation

Chemotherapy and radiation can lower your fertility (ability to have children). But there may be ways for you to keep, or preserve, your fertility.

- If you may want to have children in the future, tell your doctor, nurse or social worker before you start your treatment.
- Ask your doctor about fertility preservation options.

### Preparing a living will

In a living will, also called an advance care directive or health care directive, you can:

- Say what kind of care you would or would not want if you aren't able to speak for yourself
- Share your preferences about treatments to prolong your life if some of your organs stop working (for example, a breathing machine if you can no longer breathe on your own)
- Choose someone who can make medical decisions for you

Living wills can be helpful throughout your treatment. For example, if you are really sick during a temporary complication, there could be a short amount of time when you can't tell your doctors what you want. Your health care team can turn to your appointed person during these short amounts of time.

Having a living will means your family and medical team aren't left wondering what kind of care you would or would not want to have.

## RESOURCES FOR YOU

Talk to someone who can help:

- Contact a BMT Patient Navigator:
  - Call: 1 (888) 999-6743
  - Email: [patientinfo@nmdp.org](mailto:patientinfo@nmdp.org)
  - Visit: [BeTheMatch.org/one-on-one](https://www.bethematch.org/one-on-one)

Talk to someone who understands:

- Connect with other patients or caregivers:
  - Visit: [BeTheMatch.org/PeerConnect](https://www.bethematch.org/PeerConnect)
  - Visit: [BeTheMatch.org/SupportGroups](https://www.bethematch.org/SupportGroups)

Order free resources at [BeTheMatch.org/request](https://www.bethematch.org/request).

Here are some resources you might find helpful:

- VIDEO: *Basics of BMT*
- BOOKLET: *Transplant Basics*



## 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](mailto:patientinfo@nmdp.org) | WEB: [BeTheMatch.org/one-on-one](https://www.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.