

Transplant and Multiple Myeloma (MM)

Learning more about your treatment options can help you make informed medical decisions.

This fact sheet tells you:

- What MM is
- What the transplant steps are
- When to see a transplant doctor
- Questions to ask your doctor

What is multiple myeloma?

Multiple myeloma is a cancer of the plasma cells. Plasma cells are a type of blood cell. Normal plasma cells help your body fight infections. In MM, the unhealthy plasma cells don't fight infections very well. They can also weaken bones and damage kidneys.

What is a blood or marrow transplant (BMT)?

BMT, also known as a bone marrow transplant, can be used to treat patients with MM. It replaces the unhealthy blood-forming cells with healthy ones. For most patients, transplant delays the MM coming back (relapse).

There are 2 types of transplant for MM:

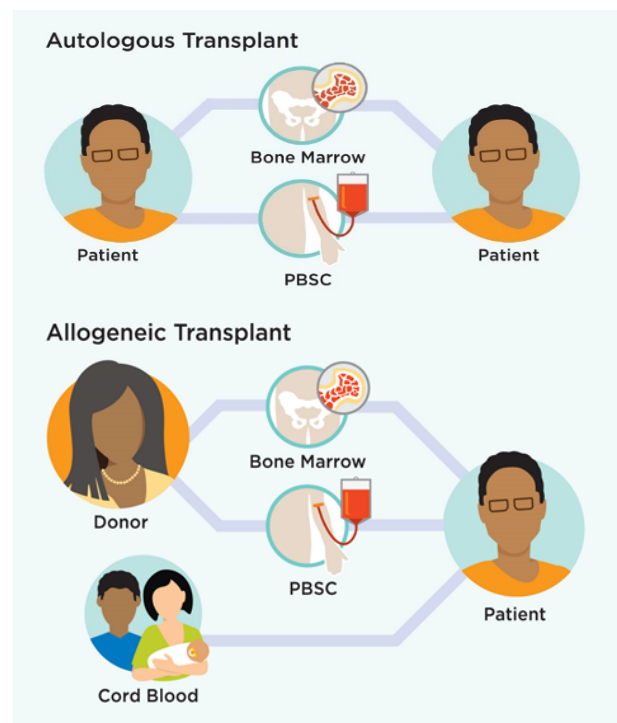
1. Autologous transplant uses the patient's own blood-forming cells which are collected and stored for later use.
2. Allogeneic transplant uses healthy blood-forming cells from a family member, unrelated donor, or umbilical cord blood.

Both types of transplants are used to treat MM, but autologous is more common.

Transplant steps

1. First, if you're having an autologous transplant, your blood-forming cells will be collected from your bloodstream or from your hip bone. If you're having an allogeneic transplant your doctor will first search for a donor.
2. For both types of transplant, you get chemotherapy (chemo), with or without radiation, to kill the unhealthy myeloma cells.
3. Then, on transplant day, the replacement cells are given to you through an intravenous (IV) infusion. The cells travel to the marrow inside your bones.
4. After a few weeks, the cells begin to make healthy blood cells.
5. Then, you'll need many months to recover. You'll spend some of this time in or near the hospital.

Doctors, nurses and social workers will closely care for you during the entire process to prevent and treat any side effects or complications.



When to see a transplant doctor

You should see a transplant doctor:

- At diagnosis or soon after starting treatment for MM
- If the myeloma is getting worse

Your first appointment with a transplant doctor

At your first appointment, the transplant doctor will:

- Review your medical history.
- Talk with you about your treatment options and their risks and benefits.
- Recommend the best time for you to get a transplant and prepare for treatment.
- Start a donor search. Even if you don't need an allogeneic transplant right away, searching early can help you get a transplant faster if you need one later.

Questions to ask your doctor

What are my chances of a cure or long-term remission if I get a transplant? If I don't get a transplant?

What are the risks of waiting or trying other treatments before a transplant?

Does my current health or age affect how well transplant might work for me?

What are the possible side effects of transplant? How can they be reduced?

How might my quality of life change over time, with or without transplant?

Resources for you

Talk to someone who can help:

- Contact a BMT Patient Navigator:
 - Call: 1 (888) 999-6743
 - Email: patientinfo@nmdp.org

Order free resources to learn more. To see a full list, visit [BeTheMatch.org/request](https://www.bethematch.org/request)

Here are some that you might find helpful:

- VIDEO: Basics of Blood and Marrow Transplant
- BOOKLET: Transplant Basics
- BROCHURE: Transplant Outcomes and Treatment Decisions