

# Stem Cell Transplant: Before Your Procedure

Blood stem cells are special cells formed inside your bones.

These special cells create the different types of cells in your blood.

Sometimes a disease such as aplastic anemia, multiple myeloma, leukemia, or lymphoma can damage stem cells.

A stem cell transplant replaces the damaged cells with healthy stem cells.

These healthy stem cells can come from you or from another person.

Who the stem cells come from for your transplant depends on many things, including your health and the reasons for the transplant.

Here are some things to think about.

A stem cell transplant has serious health risks, such as severe infections and bleeding.

From preparation to the recovery, the whole process can take a long time.

You'll also need to be away from home, which can be hard and complicated.

But learning more about the transplant, including what to expect, can help.

Now once you and your doctor decide that a stem cell transplant is right for you, the care team will help you make plans on where you will stay.

That's because you will need to stay or live near a transplant center or hospital for as long as 3 months.

Sometime before the procedure you'll meet with your medical team.

And you'll have some medical tests.

If the care team plans to use your own stem cells, they'll do a procedure called a stem cell collection to get the stem cells from your blood.

Before your stem cell transplant, you will likely have a procedure to place a catheter.

The catheter is a small, flexible tube.

One end will be put inside a blood vessel in or near your chest or neck.

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The other end of the catheter will be placed under your skin and will come out on your chest.

It will have a few openings that can be used to draw blood and give fluids, medicines, and blood transfusions.

The catheter helps make your treatment more comfortable because you won't need to have as many sticks from needles.

Now there's still more that can happen before your transplant, including immunotherapy, chemotherapy, radiation, or all three.

This helps prepare your body by destroying as many of the damaged cells as possible.

And the treatments also help your body accept the new stem cells.

You may have side effects, such as mouth sores, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, and hair loss.

Your doctor can give you medicine that may help with some of the side effects.

You will also be at risk for infections.

The care team will teach you ways to help prevent infections.

Let's look at how the healthy stem cells will be put into your body.

You will receive the stem cells through the catheter.

This is called an infusion.

And it may take up to a few hours, but it shouldn't be painful.

The stem cells will start to make new cells in a few weeks.

Caregivers, family, and other visitors will need to follow the care team's rules for visiting.

This is to help keep you safe from infection.

After the procedure, your blood will be tested often to find out if the new stem cells are growing.

And you may need transfusions until your body starts making its own blood cells.

Follow your doctor's directions for preparing for your procedure, including when you should stop eating and drinking.

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Bring your photo ID, health insurance card, and any paperwork your hospital may have asked for.

Having a stem cell transplant can be a lot to think about.

But knowing what to expect and how to prepare can help.

And remember, you can always call your doctor or others on your care team if you have any questions or concerns.