

Preparing for a Bone Marrow Transplant Toolkit

Although the actual transplant may take only a few hours, a BMT (bone marrow transplant) is a process that requires advanced preparations and good quality care during the recovery period.

We have collected some tips and advice from other Belongers to help you:

- ❖ Ask the medical team to explain the details of the transplant to you in a simple way.
- ❖ Take control. Understand the possible side effects, how to manage them and if they may be temporary or permanent.
- ❖ Ask your transplant team for a realistic estimate about how long your recovery will take.
- ❖ Talk with someone who has been through a transplant to get some insight on what to expect, the community within the app is a great place to receive advice.
- ❖ A BMT is a family affair. By learning all the facts about your disease, treatment schedule, and potential side effects, you will be able to provide the family with some sense of understanding of what you are about to go through and how this may affect the entire family.
- ❖ It is important to prepare yourself and your family emotionally for the transplant and recovery period.
- ❖ For people who plan on having children after a transplant, discuss preserving fertility with the medical team, who can guide you in the steps needed.
- ❖ Identify a full-time caregiver or team of caregivers to manage all your needs such as children, pets, household bills, responsibilities, and expenses while undergoing treatment and during the transplant recovery stage.
- ❖ Choose a friend or family member you trust to be in charge of your social network of volunteers and visiting times.
- ❖ Ask the bank what you need to do so your spouse/someone else can handle certain transactions for you.
- ❖ Make a list of important phone numbers, including the names and numbers of your health care team and caregivers. Share the list with your caregiver, spouse, or family member.
- ❖ If at times you feel sad or discouraged, know these feelings are normal.
- ❖ If sleeping becomes a problem, speak to the medical team, or perhaps consider using cognitive behavioral therapy designed specifically for insomnia.
- ❖ Some people experience sexual problems after transplant. Discuss your feelings with your partner and speak to the medical team or consider consulting with a sex therapist.
- ❖ An experienced Neurologist may be able to help alleviate symptoms of peripheral

neuropathy. You may want to keep a check on your feet for signs of ulcers and infections. If peripheral neuropathy is affecting your balance, consult a physical therapist.

- ❖ Keep up to date on family, school, and work events, this helps you remain in control and provides a sense of belonging.
- ❖ Asking for help is a sign of strength and wisdom, not a sign of weakness.
- ❖ Focus on the things you can control, rather than allowing yourself to worry about all the details that are beyond your control.
- ❖ Remember to take care of your long-term health by being your own best advocate, an active, informed member of your healthcare team.

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