

# Discharge Instructions for Bone Marrow or Stem Cell Transplant



After a bone marrow or stem cell transplant, your risk of infection is higher. This is because your immune system is weak for up to 6 months after the transplant. You will need to protect yourself from infection. Follow the guidelines on this sheet.

## Activity

- Increase your activity slowly as directed by your healthcare provider.
- Begin with light exercise, such as walking.
- Get plenty of rest. Take breaks between activities.
- Check with your healthcare provider before driving a car.
- Don't swim until the central venous catheters or external devices have been removed.
- Ask your healthcare provider when you can expect to return to work or school.
- Don't ride a bicycle or motorcycle until your healthcare provider says it is OK.

## Skin care

To take care of your skin:

- Wash your hands often, especially after using the bathroom.
- Wash your hands before and after caring for your central venous catheter, if you have one.
- Use an electric razor for shaving.

To protect your skin from the sun:

- Use hypoallergenic sunscreen with SPF of 15 or higher.
- Don't let the sunshine directly on your skin.
- Cover your head with a wig, scarf, or cap when you are outside.

## Limiting contact with germs

- Check with your healthcare provider before having intimate contact with anyone.
- Wear a mask when you walk through the hospital.
- Ask your healthcare provider before using certain cosmetics, contact lenses, tampons, and douches.
- Don't go to crowded public places, such as sporting events, concerts, or shopping malls. You can go to these places after your immune system has recovered. If you have to be in a crowd, wear a mask.
- Don't have contact with anyone who has an infection. This includes a cold and the flu. It also includes measles, chicken pox, herpes, viruses, pinkeye, coughs, and sore throats.
- Limit visits with young children. They often have colds or other infections.

- Follow a low-bacteria diet. Ask your healthcare provider for more information about this diet.
- Ask your healthcare provider about contact with pets or animals. Wash your hands right away after animal contact. Don't touch pet urine or feces. Don't clean litter boxes, cages, or aquariums.
- Keep your home clean. Clean floors, carpets, furniture, and countertops often. Make sure your bathroom is clean. Have someone else clean if possible. Wash your hands after handling trash.

## Limiting contact with chemicals

- Don't smoke or use tobacco or nicotine.
- Don't do yard work. This includes gardening, mowing the lawn, or raking leaves. Don't handle cut flowers or potted plants.
- Don't work on cars or machinery.
- Wear a mask when you are near construction areas. Wear a mask in windy places, and any area with dust or fumes.
- Stay away from chemicals and fumes, such as gasoline, fuel oil, and paints. Stay away from pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers.
- Don't use portable humidifiers or vaporizers. They can grow mold or bacteria.

## Taking medicine

- Take your medicines exactly as prescribed by your healthcare provider. This is very important. Follow your healthcare provider's directions carefully. Never skip your medicines.
- Don't take any over-the-counter medicines, supplements, or herbal remedies unless you talk with your healthcare provider first.
- Tell your healthcare provider about any side effects you have.

## Follow-up care

Follow up is critical. Keep all of your healthcare appointments. Recovery is a long process. It can sometimes be difficult. If you or your family have emotional or financial strain, ask your healthcare provider about resources that can help.

## When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these:

- Any abnormal bleeding
- Vomiting, with or without blood
- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your provider
- Shaking chills
- Shortness of breath
- Cough or sore throat
- Burning or pain with urination

- Severe headache or confusion
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Loss of consciousness
- Black or tarry stools
- Diarrhea that does not go away after 2 loose stools
- Belly pain or cramping
- Any chest pain
- Rash
- Any new symptom that concerns you

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