**Learn About Your Disease**

Once the initial shock of a bone marrow failure diagnosis wears off, the best thing to do is learn as much as possible about your life-changing disease. Knowledge is power, and learning about what’s happening to your body will help you remain focused and hopeful. Here are the basics of aplastic anemia, MDS and PNH with links you can follow to more detailed descriptions.

A diagnosis of rare [bone marrow failure](http://beta.aamds.org/glossary/terms#bone_marrow_failure) disease can confuse and overwhelm patients and their loved ones. There is much to learn, and this website provides the information you need to know. We have assembled the latest and most accurate information available on bone marrow failure disease. And since people learn in different ways, we present a variety of learning experiences, including a range of online resources with disease-specific features, interactive learning programs, educational videos, print booklets and newsletters and live regional patient and family conferences.

Learning is a process, so don’t feel pressured to learn everything at once. There’s a lot to digest, so be gentle with yourself as you read through our materials. Take notes as you go along and ask your doctor to clarify any questions you have based on what you’ve read.

[**Aplastic Anemia**](http://beta.aamds.org/diseases/aplastic-anemia)

[Aplastic anemia](http://beta.aamds.org/glossary/terms#aplastic_anemia) is a rare disease in which the [bone marrow](http://beta.aamds.org/glossary/terms#bone_marrow) stops producing enough blood cells. Any blood cells the marrow does make are completely normal, but there are simply not enough of them to serve the body's needs. With prompt and proper care, most patients can be successfully treated.

[**Myelodysplastic Syndromes (MDS)**](http://beta.aamds.org/diseases/mds)

[Myelodysplastic syndromes](http://beta.aamds.org/glossary/terms#myelodysplastic_syndromes) (MDS) are a family of disorders in which the [bone marrow](http://beta.aamds.org/glossary/terms#bone_marrow) fails to make enough healthy red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets. Instead, it produces underdeveloped, or immature, cells that have an abnormal shape, size or look. Most experts agree that MDS is a form of blood and bone marrow cancer.

[**Paroxysmal Nocturnal Hemoglobinuria (PNH)**](http://beta.aamds.org/diseases/pnh)

[Paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria](http://beta.aamds.org/glossary/terms#paroxysmal_nocturnal_hemoglobinuria) (PNH) is an ultra-rare [bone marrow failure](http://beta.aamds.org/glossary/terms#bone_marrow_failure) disease in which red blood cells break apart. Normal red blood cells have a shield of proteins that protect them from coming under attack by the body's own immune system. PNH occurs because that protein shield is missing.

**Don't Believe Everything You Read**

Worried patients, especially the newly diagnosed, may be inclined to accept everything they read, even if what they’re reading doesn’t necessarily apply to them. You need to know that some public information may be outdated, misleading or just plain wrong. Learn more about how to evaluate health information and better understand how to find trustworthy and accurate information. **[link to URL for evaluating health info]**

**Learn from Others**

It’s completely normal to be scared by your diagnosis. But keep in mind that there is now more information, more research and more treatment options available for [bone marrow](http://beta.aamds.org/glossary/terms#bone_marrow) disease than ever before. Like the patients before you, you can develop strategies for coping, learning and managing medical information. Here are some ways to find the support and connection that will help:

* Consider talking with a Peer Support volunteer. These are patients who have lived with [bone marrow failure](http://beta.aamds.org/glossary/terms#bone_marrow_failure), gone through treatments and coped with the emotional challenges of a life-threatening disease.
* Join a support group **[link to URL]**. We have Community of Hope support groups around the country.
* Participate in online groups and forums. Start with [**www.marrowforums.org**](http://www.marrowforums.org), a supportive group where you can learn, get feedback and share concerns with patients like you.
* Attend one of our Patient and Family Conferences **[link to patient page]**