



Stem Cell Donors
Australia



**Looking
after yourself
before you
donate**

**When you're
selected to
donate, you may
feel anxious or
keen to stay well.**

This is a common position felt by many blood stem cell donors; to keep well enough to donate to a patient. First and foremost, no matter what you do, something may happen that's outside of your control - like falling ill shortly before you donate. It's okay. We have processes in place to deal with situations such as these. Please let your Donor Support Coordinator know if you start to feel unwell or if something comes up.



While you cannot prevent everything, there is plenty you can do to take care of yourself before you donate.

- 1. Get adequate sleep.** The week before you donate, while injecting G-CSF, it's best to make sure you are getting enough sleep. This varies from person to person, but the recommended amount is 7 to 8 hours. It seems obvious, but sleep can help your resilience when preparing to donate, especially if you inject G-CSF.
- 2. Stay well-hydrated.** While coffee, tea, or other liquids can be easy to drink, it's better to grab 8 glasses of water (250 ml per glass) daily if possible. Staying hydrated can help with vein access (making it easier for the needle to be inserted the first time) and increase your tolerance for the procedure.
- 3. Eat regularly.** This is particularly beneficial on the day of your donation and while you're preparing to donate. Fill up on a hearty breakfast that contains protein and isn't excessively fatty, so you feel full for the day ahead.
- 4. Rest when you can.** When preparing for a donation, you have the excuse to take it easy! If you donate by a peripheral blood stem cell (PBSC) procedure, your G-CSF injections may make you feel tired and achy. Producing stem cells in your blood requires energy. So, it's best to rest when you can. Do you have a favourite podcast or book you've been meaning to pick up?
- 5. Gentle exercise.** You don't have to give everything up! Try some gentle yoga, walking, or tai chi to keep you well and happy.
- 6. Limit your alcohol consumption.** This one may seem strict, but when preparing to donate, it's best to stay away from alcohol and other recreational drugs.
- 7. Indulge in non-strenuous hobbies and interests.** Your mental health also matters – spending time taking up hobbies that don't require strenuous activity, particularly while preparing for or donating, can work wonders for your health. Think Origami making, learning to juggle, or star gazing (to name a few).
- 8. If you feel nervous or concerned, talk to a friend, family member, or your Donor Support Coordinator.** Don't keep your feelings bottled up—speak to a trusted person. If parts of the donation process bother you, we encourage you to speak to your Donor Support Coordinator.
- 9. Do something that brings someone joy.** Oh wait, you're already doing that! The person who is about to receive your blood stem cells is incredibly grateful for the effort, time and care you put into donating. Thank you.

