



Stem Cell Donors
Australia



**What to
expect on
the day you
donate PBSC**

Donation day is a significant moment in your journey as a blood stem cell donor.

Understanding what will happen at the collection centre can help ease any anxieties and ensure you're well-prepared. This factsheet provides an overview of what to expect when you donate via PBSC (peripheral blood stem cell) collection.



1. The day before donation

Depending on how far away you live from the collection centre, you may check in with your nominated support person at a nearby hotel. This ensures you get a good night's sleep and are ready for the donation the next day.

2. Arrival at the collection centre

- a. **Checking in.** You'll arrive at the collection centre early in the morning. After checking in at reception, a nurse will guide you through the day's procedures and help you settle in.
- b. **Pre-procedure preparation.** You'll be taken to a comfortable donation area, where you'll sit in a reclining chair. A nurse will take your vital signs, including your blood pressure, heart rate, and temperature, to ensure you're ready to begin. They'll also take some blood tests, explain the process, and answer any last-minute questions you might have.

3. The donation procedure

- a. **Placement of IV lines.** The nurse will place an IV line in one or both arms. If you had small or difficult veins noted at your Workup assessment, the option of a central line (a catheter placed into a larger vein) might have been raised. If so, the procedure will be explained beforehand, and a consent form will be provided.
- b. **Beginning the apheresis process.** Once the IV lines are in place, the apheresis machine draws blood from one of your arms. The blood passes through the machine, which collects the stem cells. The remaining blood components are then returned to your body.
- c. **Duration of the procedure.** The PBSC donation process typically takes four to six hours. During this time, you'll be seated comfortably, and you can relax, watch a movie, listen to a podcast, or even take a nap. The medical staff will check on you regularly to ensure you're comfortable.
- d. **Managing discomfort.**
 - **Side effects:** Some donors experience mild side effects such as tingling around the mouth, fingers, or toes due to the anticoagulant used in the apheresis process. This is usually managed by administering calcium supplements or slowing the procedure slightly.
 - **Comfort measures:** You may feel cold during the donation due to the blood circulating through the machine. Blankets will be provided, and you can ask for a warm drink or snack to stay comfortable.

4. After the donation

- a. **Post-procedure monitoring.** Once the donation is complete, the IV lines will be removed, and you'll be asked to rest for a short period. The nurse will monitor your vital signs and ensure you feel well before leaving the collection centre.
- b. **Managing post-donation symptoms.**
 - **Fatigue:** It's normal to feel tired after the donation. Resting for the remainder of the day is recommended.
 - **Side effects from G-CSF:** If you experienced bone pain or aches from the G-CSF injections leading up to the donation, these symptoms may linger for a day or two. Over-the-counter pain relievers, such as paracetamol, can help manage this discomfort.

5. Discharge and home care

- a. **Discharge process.** Before you leave, the medical team will provide aftercare instructions, including tips on staying hydrated, managing any lingering side effects, and when to resume normal activities.
- b. **Arranging transportation.** You may feel a bit tired or lightheaded after the donation, so it's a good idea to arrange for someone to pick you up from the collection centre and accompany you home.
- c. **Recovery at home.** Most donors can return to regular activities the next day, although some may need an extra day or two to fully recover. Make sure to rest, eat well, and drink plenty of fluids to support your recovery.

Blood stem cell donation is a straightforward process supported by a dedicated medical team focused on your safety and comfort. Knowing what to expect can help you feel more prepared and confident as you go through this life-changing procedure.

