



Stem Cell Donors
Australia



**What to expect
on the day you
donate your
bone marrow**



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 your bone marrow.



1. Arrival at the collection centre

- a. **Checking in.** You'll arrive at the collection centre early in the morning. After checking in at reception, you'll be greeted by a nurse who will guide you through the preparations for the procedure.
- b. **Meeting the medical team.** Before the procedure begins, you'll meet with the anaesthetist and the collection clinician. The anaesthetist will explain the anaesthesia process and answer any questions. The collection clinician will review the procedure with you one last time to ensure you're comfortable and informed.



2. The donation procedure

- a. **Moving to the operating room.** Once you're prepped, you'll be wheeled into the operating room. The environment may seem intimidating, but rest assured that the medical team is there to support you every step of the way.
- b. **Administration of anaesthesia.** In the operating room, the anaesthetist will administer general anaesthesia through an IV line, so you'll be completely asleep during the procedure. You won't feel any pain or be aware of what's happening.
- c. **Bone marrow extraction.** While you're under anaesthesia, the collection clinician will use a special needle to extract liquid marrow from the back of your pelvic bone. The procedure typically takes about one to two hours. The marrow collected depends on the recipient's needs but is limited to a maximum of 20 mL per kilogram of donor weight.





3. Recovery and aftercare

- a. **Waking up in recovery.** After the procedure, you'll be taken to a recovery room, where you'll gradually wake up from the anaesthesia. A nurse will monitor your vital signs and ensure you're comfortable as you regain full consciousness. You might feel a bit groggy or disoriented as the anaesthesia wears off.
- b. **Managing pain and discomfort.** You may experience some soreness or bruising at the sites where the marrow was extracted. This discomfort is typically mild to moderate and can be managed with pain relievers like paracetamol, which your medical team will provide.
- c. **Post-procedure monitoring.** You'll be closely monitored for a few hours to ensure there are no immediate complications. Most donors can go home the same day, though some may stay overnight for additional observation, depending on their condition.



4. Discharge and home care

- a. **Discharge process.** You'll be discharged from the collection centre once the medical team is satisfied with your recovery. You'll receive detailed instructions on how to care for yourself at home, including managing pain, recognising signs of infection, and what activities to avoid during your recovery.
- b. **Arranging transportation.** Since you'll still be feeling the effects of anaesthesia, you won't be able to drive yourself home. Be sure to arrange for someone to pick you up and stay with you for the rest of the day.
- c. **Rest and recovery at home.** At home, it's important to rest for a few days. You might feel tired or sore, especially in your lower back, but most donors return to normal activities within a week. Avoid strenuous activities, heavy lifting, or intense exercise until you feel fully recovered.

Bone marrow 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. If you have any concerns or questions, a Donor Support Coordinator will guide you every step of the way.