

Is your loved one donating blood stem cells?



The idea of donating blood stem cells may leave you feeling worried or concerned. Stem Cell Donors Australia facilitates a database of registered volunteers who are matched to patients looking for a blood stem cell transplant to treat their blood cancer or disorder.

Blood stem cell transplants are usually the last line of treatment in the hope to cure a patient.



Sophie, blood stem cell
transplant recipient

Your loved one has been identified as a potential match.

This means they could be selected as the most suitable match for a patient. You may be concerned that:

There are long-term health risks associated with donation

A well-established and routine procedure — Thousands* of blood stem cell donations occur every year worldwide. Donors have been donating their blood stem cells for over 50 years** and counting.

Your loved one may experience complications

Donors are our top priority — A donor's health and well-being is our primary focus. We support them through every step of the process and thoroughly screen donors to ensure they can donate.

Donating may take an emotional toll on your loved one

There's support during and after donation — Your loved one has a dedicated Donor Support Coordinator. The Donor Support Coordinator will assist your loved one with any concerns or challenges. They'll check to see how they are doing and provide opportunities to answer questions.

Blood stem cell donation is demanding and invasive

Minimally invasive — 90% of the time, a donor will undergo a peripheral blood stem cell (PBSC) donation. This non-surgical procedure involves inserting a needle into each arm, filtering out the blood stem cells, and returning the remaining blood. In 10% of cases, a bone marrow donation occurs where a donor is put to sleep and, using a thin needle, bone marrow is removed from the back of the hips with no need for stitches.

There can be temporary side effects — Donors can experience some side effects when preparing for donation, through G-CSF injections, and for a few days after they donate. These typically resolve within a few days to a week post-donation. Paracetamol and rest can help relieve symptoms.

References:

* <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41409-022-01667-w.pdf>

** The History of Blood and Marrow Transplantation | BMT Infonet

What else should I know?

1. Unlike blood, not just anyone can donate. Every donor is a unique match:

Our immune system has HLA markers, like biological barcodes inherited from our parents and unique, like fingerprints. The donor's blood stem cells must go undetected by the recipient's body to avoid rejection.

2. Donating can save someone's life:

A donor will directly impact someone with a blood cancer or disorder. Their blood stem cells can give the recipient a second chance at life.

Want to learn more?

If you want to read up on blood stem cell donation, check out these resources:

1. Watch this video for a quick overview
[The journey to donate blood stem cells](#)
2. Make sure you have no misconceptions about donating
[No bones about it: separating facts from marrow myths](#)
3. See first-hand the impact a blood stem cell transplant can have
[When Hugh met Kalven](#)

Want to get involved?

If you are aged 18 – 35 and interested in joining the registry, please visit our website: [**Stem Cell Donors Australia**](#)

If you are over 35, you can still get involved:

- Let younger family members know about Stem Cell Donors Australia
- You can donate to one of our partners listed on our website.
- Alternatively, if you're under 75, you could donate blood (provided you meet **Red Cross Lifeblood's eligibility**) — many bone marrow patients require blood transfusions.

This could be a life-changing moment for a patient, and supporting your employee can make all the difference.



Flynn, blood stem cell transplant recipient



**Stem Cell
Donors**
Australia