

Pre-Admission Patient Orientation

Utah Blood and Marrow Transplant Program

Welcome to the Huntsman Cancer Institute (HCI) Blood and Marrow Transplant (BMT) Unit. We want your stay to be as comfortable and positive as possible. Here is some information to help you prepare for your stay.

What to Bring from Home

Clothing. You may bring your own pajamas or wear hospital pajamas. You can also bring loose, comfortable clothing. Tops that open down the front allow easier access to your central lines. Please bring clean, freshly washed clothes. A washer and dryer are available on the fourth floor.

Slippers or shoes. Please bring a pair of clean slippers or non-skid shoes that are easy to put on and take off. Always wear your slippers or shoes when you are out of bed. Remove them before getting back into bed.

Luggage. Please do not bring luggage that has been stored in an attic or basement. It may carry dust that can cause lung infections. We will provide germ-killing wipes to clean everything you bring into your room.

Walking devices. If you use a cane, walker, or crutches to get around at home, please be sure to bring it with you to the hospital.

Eyeglasses. You may not wear contact lenses during the transplant. Be sure to bring your eyeglasses.

Activities and entertainment. You may bring items to help you pass the time while you are in the hospital:

- Books
- DVDs and CDs
- Needlework, knitting, crocheting
- Computer, electronic reader, music player
- New board games
- Other hobbies or interests

Feel free to bring photographs of family, friends, pets, and loved ones to decorate your room. We want you to feel as at home and comfortable as possible.

Each room has a TV and DVD player. A recreational therapist is available to help you with activities.

Any electrical item you bring must be checked for safety by hospital staff. Most personal electrical items will not meet code for use in a hospital. Here are examples of items that are not allowed:

- Hair dryers
- Curling irons
- Heating pads
- Coffee makers
- Blenders
- Portable fans
- Mini-refrigerators

BMT Unit Routine

A health care assistant (HCA) will record your vital signs every four hours. Your vital signs include blood pressure, temperature, pulse, and breathing rate. Sometimes, such as if you have a fever, we may check your vital signs more often. The HCA will record your weight every day.

Your transplant team measures everything you eat and drink. The team also measures everything that leaves your body—your stool, urine, and vomit. These measurements are important to track how your body is functioning. If you eat food or drink beverages from outside, please tell your nurse or HCA so that they can record them on the Calorie Count sheet posted on your door.

Every day between 4 and 5 a.m., we will draw blood from your central line for lab tests. The tests include a complete blood count (CBC) and chemistries. A CBC checks your white blood cells, platelet counts, and hemoglobin. Chemistries monitor minerals in your body to make sure they are at proper levels. We also draw blood to test for infection when your temperature is 100.4°F or higher.

Every morning, a provider and nurse will come to your room to assess your condition.

Every morning your entire transplant team meets to talk about your care. Afterward, a BMT doctor will visit you to provide an update on your progress.

Medications

It is important that you take the medicines and treatments your transplant doctor has ordered. They may cause side effects such as pain, nausea, or diarrhea. Talk to your transplant team. They can give you medicines that help ease the side effects.

Exercise

It is important that you exercise every day during your hospital stay. Exercise lowers your risk of getting pneumonia. Exercise also keeps your muscles strong so that you recover faster you lose muscle mass every day that you do not exercise.

HCI's Wellness and Integrative Health Center helps coordinate an exercise program that is right for you. A physical therapist will visit to give you exercise instruction.

You may walk the hall on the BMT unit, staying within the double doors. You should always wear a mask when you are outside of your room. Sitting up in a chair during the day is healthier for you than staying in bed. Please wear slippers or shoes whenever you are not in bed.

Fall Prevention

Some of the medications you will be taking may make it hard for you to walk or get in and out of bed. Please call your nurse and HCA if you need help. We do not want you to fall or get hurt.

Incentive Spirometer

You will get a device called an incentive spirometer. It measures how much air you can breathe in. Using it helps prevent pneumonia and strengthens your lungs. Using the mouthpiece on the spirometer, inhale deeply for 10 breaths in a row, each hour while you are awake.

Emotional Well-Being

Cancer changes many aspects of life, both for patients and their loved ones. HCI's Patient and Family Support staff are licensed social workers. They help you and your loved ones cope with these changes. Please ask for help whenever you need it.

Social workers give many kinds of support:

- Emotional
- Physical
- Practical
- Spiritual

It is normal for you to feel anxiety, distress, grief, and uncertainty. There is no right or wrong way to feel or react.

Share your feelings with your loved ones and your transplant team. This will make it easier to help each other through a difficult time. Your transplant team is here to care of you, not just to treat your cancer.

Complementary therapies. Many patients use complementary therapies to help their sense of well-being during the transplant. HCI's Wellness and Integrative Health Center can work with your transplant team to help you. Here are some examples of complementary therapy:

- Massage
- Reiki
- Guided imagery
- Aromatherapy
- Breathing techniques
- Yoga
- Music
- Journaling
- Art

Please talk to your nurse or social worker about how we can best support your needs.

Hygiene

The transplant process weakens your immune system for a time. This makes it easy for you to get infections. Keeping yourself clean is the first defense against germs.

Masks. Whenever you go outside your room, you must wear the filter mask we give you. Always wash your hands when leaving and entering your room.

Air filters. The BMT unit has a special air filter system to keep the air clean. You must keep the door to your room closed at all times so the filter system works right.

Infection prevention. Everybody carries germs. You are vulnerable to some of these normal germs when your white blood cell (WBC) count is low. A low WBC count is called neutropenia. You will have neutropenia during the BMT process. Follow the instructions your transplant team gives for keeping all parts of your body clean.

Skin care. Your skin is the first line of defense against infection. It needs special care during transplants.

- Hand washing is the best way to prevent infection. Wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before eating, and after using the bathroom, touching another person, blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, reading a magazine or newspaper. You must wash your hands every time you enter or leave your room. This rule also applies to all your visitors and your medical team.
- Shower daily. Cover your central line with plastic while showering. After you shower your nurse or HCA will bring you CHG wipes. These special bath wipes help prevent bacteria from growing on your skin. You should wipe off with them after your shower each day.
- Keep your skin soft. Many BMT patients have dry and cracking skin. You may bring your own lotion and lip balm, or we can supply them. If you bring your own lotion, it must be a fresh bottle that no one else has used. Do not use lip balms that contain petroleum.

Mouth care. Taking good care of your teeth and mouth is important while your immune system recovers.

Brush your teeth everyday. We will provide a soft toothbrush. You should change to a new toothbrush every month, or more often if needed. You can use your own toothpaste, or we can provide it.

- Your absolute neutrophil count must be greater than 500 and platelet count greater than 20,000 to use a toothbrush. If your counts are lower than this, use these alternatives:
 - Commercial mouthwash that does not contain alcohol or hydrogen peroxide.
 - Salt water mix

To prevent mouth sores, your transplant team recommends the following: Rinse your mouth with

saline solution every two hours to help prevent mouth sores. Do the routine at least four times a day. We will provide you with a salt and baking soda solution for this.

Shaving and nail care. Even tiny nicks and cuts can start infections when your immune system is weak.

- Do not bring nail clippers or razor blades to the BMT unit. Clip your fingernails and toenails before you come to the hospital. While in the BMT unit, use emery boards to file your nails.
- Shave with an electric razor. You may bring in your own battery-operated or rechargeable razor, but hospital staff must check that it meets safety codes.
- If you wear artificial fingernails, have them removed before your hospital stay. They harbor germs and are not allowed on the BMT unit.

Eye and nose care. It is important to prevent eye infections and nosebleeds.

- You may not wear contact lenses during transplant. Using contact lenses may increase the risk of infection and scratches on the eye. We will provide saline eye drops to ease eye dryness.
- Do not blow your nose forcefully when your platelet count is low. It can cause serious nosebleeds. We will give you a spray to relieve dry nasal passages.

Isolation Precautions

Certain germs spread very easily by touch or through the air. If you get infected by these germs, you will be put on special isolation precautions. Your health care team and visitors will wear disposable gloves, gowns, and eyewear to prevent spreading germs to other patients. You will have to stay in your room except when medically necessary.

Visitors and Visiting Hours

While on the BMT unit you may designate two visitors. One of them may visit each day between the hours of 9am and 9pm. There are a few safety rules for visitors:

- Please check with your nurse for updates on our current visitor policy.
- People who have any kind of infection or symptoms of illness may not visit you.

- People who have been recently exposed to infections such as colds, flu, or chickenpox may not visit you.
- People recently immunized with live vaccines should wait 2-4 weeks before visiting. Ask your transplant doctor or nurse for more information.
- Visitors must not touch IV pumps or any other equipment.
- Visitors must not use the bathroom or shower in your room. Restrooms and shower facilities for visitors are available on the fourth floor.
- Fresh or dried flowers and latex balloons are not allowed on the BMT unit. Visitors may bring cards, silk flower arrangements, or Mylar balloons.
- While Covid 19 precautions are in place all visitors must wear a mask and remain inside your room.

Appetite and Nutrition

Many patients lose their appetite during transplant. It can be hard to eat enough food. Many BMT patients eventually need a food supplement called total parenteral nutrition (TPN). TPN is a milky-looking liquid that goes directly into a vein.

Your transplant doctor may put you on a special or restricted diet at certain times during your transplant. Please check with your nurse before bringing any food or snacks to the BMT unit.

The nutrition section of your education binder has more information about food you can eat.

A Note from the BMT Staff

Our goal is to help you through the transplant process safely and infection-free. Our BMT unit policies help us meet that goal. We will do all we can to help you, but you and your loved ones also need to be active participants in your care:

- Follow the mouth care routine to prevent infections and sores.
- Walk and exercise to prevent pneumonia.
- Use your incentive spirometer every hour.
- Sit up in a chair throughout the day.
- Let us know when you are nauseated or in pain so we can help you. The sooner we know, the better we can treat you. Call us for help at any time.
- Falls are common in the hospital. Please call us anytime to help you get in and out of bed or move around.

Remember, the better you take care of yourself during the transplant process, the sooner you will be released from the hospital.