

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ALLELE

One of the different forms of a specific gene. Genes are instructions that tell the body how to make all the different proteins the body needs to work properly. Alleles are part of the HLA markers used to match patients and donors.

ALLOGENEIC TRANSPLANT

A type of transplant where a patient receives healthy blood-forming cells. The healthy cells can come from a family member, unrelated donor or umbilical cord blood unit.

APHERESIS

A process to collect blood-forming cells from your bloodstream before an autologous transplant. Apheresis is also used to collect blood-forming cells from a volunteer donor to be used for an allogeneic transplant.

AUTOLOGOUS TRANSPLANT

A type of transplant where a patient's own blood-forming cells are collected, stored, and given back after chemotherapy or radiation.

BLOOD-FORMING CELLS

Cells that grow into red blood cells, white blood cells, or platelets. Also called blood stem cells.

BONE MARROW

The soft, spongy tissue inside of bones.

CELL SOURCES

The 3 places where blood-forming cells are found:

- Bone marrow
- Peripheral blood (circulating blood or bloodstream)
- Umbilical cord blood

CENTRAL VENOUS CATHETER

A long, thin tube that is put into a large vein in the chest or neck. It is used to give medicines, fluids, and blood. Also called a central line.

CHEMOTHERAPY

Medicines that destroy cancer cells or stop them from growing.

CLINICAL TRIAL

A way to gather information about how well a particular treatment, test, or approach to a disease works and what the side effects may be.

CORD BLOOD

The blood collected from the umbilical cord and placenta after a baby is born.

DISEASE-FREE SURVIVAL (DFS)

The number of patients who are alive at a certain time after treatment without any signs of the disease.

DONOR

A person who volunteers to give blood-forming cells from their bone marrow or peripheral (circulating) blood. A donor can be a family member or an unrelated donor.

ENGRAFTMENT

When the blood-forming cells start to grow and make healthy blood cells that show up in your blood.



FORMAL SEARCH

A detailed search of the Be The Match Registry®. This search shows whether a potential donor or cord blood unit is truly the best match for you. This search is not free. Your insurance may or may not pay for these costs.

GRAFT FAILURE

Occurs when the donated new cells do not make the white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets you need.

GRAFT-VERSUS-HOST DISEASE (GVHD)

A common side effect of an allogeneic transplant. This happens because of differences between your own cells (host) and the cells from your donor (graft). Your new immune system, or the donated cells, might see your cells as foreign and attack them.

- ACUTE GRAFT-VERSUS-HOST DISEASE
Usually occurs in the first 100 days or so after transplant but can occur later. This mostly affects the skin, stomach, intestines, and liver.
- CHRONIC GRAFT-VERSUS-HOST DISEASE
Usually occurs 3-6 months after transplant, but signs can show up earlier or later. Symptoms of GVHD can involve the skin, joints, mouth, and other organs.

HAPLOIDENTICAL TRANSPLANT

A type of transplant where your donor is a family member who matches half of your HLA markers. Also called a half-matched or partially matched related transplant.

HARVEST

A way to collect blood-forming cells from the bone marrow before an autologous transplant. Also a way to collect blood-forming cells from a volunteer donor to be used for an allogeneic transplant. Also called a bone marrow harvest.

HLA (HUMAN LEUKOCYTE ANTIGEN)

A protein, or marker, found on most cells in your body. There are certain HLA markers your doctor looks at for transplant. You get half of your markers from your mother and half from your father.

IMMUNE SYSTEM

The parts of your body (blood cells and organs) that fight infections.

INFORMED CONSENT

When you have been given information including the possible risks and benefits before agreeing to a treatment or clinical trial.

MARROW OR CORD BLOOD TRANSPLANT

A process to replace unhealthy bone marrow with healthy bone marrow. Also called bone marrow transplant, stem cell transplant, or BMT.

PERIPHERAL BLOOD STEM CELLS

Blood-forming cells from the circulating blood (bloodstream).

PLATELETS

Parts of the blood that help the blood clot.

PRELIMINARY SEARCH

A free search of the Be The Match Registry. This search shows the potential donors and cord blood units on the registry that could match your HLA markers.

PREPARATIVE REGIMEN

The process of preparing your body to receive the new blood-forming cells. Also called a conditioning regimen.

RED BLOOD CELLS

Blood cells that carry oxygen throughout the body.

REDUCED-INTENSITY TRANSPLANT

Preparative regimen that uses lower doses of chemotherapy with or without radiation.

WHITE BLOOD CELLS

Blood cells that fight infections.





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Every individual's medical situation, transplant experience and recovery is unique. You should always consult with your own transplant team or family doctor regarding your situation. This information is not intended to replace, and should not replace, a doctor's medical judgment or advice.