

Autologous Transplant Home Care

UNC Adult BMT and Cellular Therapy Program



Your UNC Bone Marrow Transplant team wants to be sure that you feel comfortable taking care of yourself at home when you leave the hospital. Read the information in this booklet carefully. Let us know if you have any questions.

Phone Numbers	
BMT Clinic Call 984-974-8349 Monday—Friday from 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM	On Nights, Weekends and Holidays Call 984-974-8280 Bone Marrow Transplant Unit Ask for the Charge Nurse

Call 911 in an emergency, or go to a nearby Emergency Room.

Call your UNC Transplant team if you have any of the following problems:

- ① A fever of 100.5° or higher
- ① Chills or sweats
- ① Redness, swelling, drainage or pain at an IV site, central line site or wound
- ① Severe headache
- ① New pain or pain that is getting worse
- ① Trouble breathing
- ① Bleeding or bruising that is new or severe
- ① Rash or sores on your skin
- ① Cough or chest congestion
- ① Hives or welts
- ① Burning when you urinate (“pee”)
- ① Change in the color of your urine or stool
- ① Swelling in your arms, chest, legs, face or neck
- ① Toothache or sore gums
- ① Nausea and vomiting that lasts more than 24 hours
- ① White parts of your eyes look yellow in color
- ① Unable to take any of your prescribed medicines
- ① Liquid stools, more than 8-10 times in 24 hours
- ① New runny nose
- ① Your caregiver has new cold symptoms, such as fever, runny nose, or cough

It’s very important for you to report any new symptoms to your BMT Cancer Care team. Fever and chills are the most common signs of infection. If you have a low number of white blood cells, a fever may be the only sign that you have an infection. You should check your temperature regularly. If you feel hot or flushed, check your temperature again.

Medicines

Before you go home, one of our BMT pharmacists will review all of your medicines with you. The pharmacist will also give you a medicine calendar. It's very important that you take your medicines as instructed. Don't miss any doses. Please keep track of your medicines and bring your medicine list to every clinic visit.

During your first clinic visit after discharge home, we will go over your medicines with you again. You will take an antiviral medicine for 12 months after your transplant. You will also take medicine to help protect against *pneumocystis pneumonia* (PCP) for 60 days after transplant.

Bleeding Precautions

You may continue to have a low platelet count for a while after leaving the hospital. Platelets are very important because they help your blood clot. During this time, you may be at risk for bleeding and may need to get platelet transfusions as an outpatient.

If you have an accident or cut yourself, put a dry gauze pad, towel or cloth over the cut right away. Then apply pressure for 10 minutes. If the bleeding continues, raise up the area, apply ice and call the BMT clinic or the BMT unit. If you need blood products, please remember you will need to receive **irradiated** blood products.

If your platelet count goes **below 50,000**, please follow the instructions below for your safety:

- Use an electric razor if you need to shave.
- Use a very soft toothbrush or a toothette sponge.
- Do not pick your or blow your nose, only wipe gently with a tissue.
- Do not take aspirin, ibuprofen, or any similar medicine. To be safe, please check with your doctor or BMT pharmacist before taking any over-the-counter medicines.
- Avoid activities or sports that can cause injury from straining or lifting.
- Avoid sexual activity.

If you have any of the signs and symptoms of a low platelet count below, please call your transplant team:

- Tiny pinpoint purplish red spots on skin
- Black or tarry stools
- Nosebleeds
- Blood anywhere on your body
- Bruising easily or more than usual
- Bleeding from your gums during mouth care
- Blood in your urine or vomit

Safety Rules after Autologous Transplant

Follow these safety rules to help protect yourself. These rules will help to lower the chance of getting an infection. You will not be able to prevent everything, so just do your best. We want you to try to live as normally as you can until your ability to fight infection is back to normal.



- ◆ **Stay away** from anyone who is or has been sick: runny nose, cough, cold sores, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting, fever, rash, red eyes, or chicken pox.

- ◆ **Masks.** You will receive an N95 mask before you leave the hospital. Wear the mask when coming to the clinic or hospital and when you go into a public area. You don't need to wear a mask at home or around visitors who are not sick. You will need to wear a mask when out in the yard. If your caregiver or other people staying with you become sick, let someone on your transplant team know. If you have to be around a sick family member or caregiver, wash your hands often and wear your mask. The sick person should also wear a mask around you until he or she is well.



- ◆ **Handwashing** is the best way to keep from getting an infection. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds, scrubbing between your fingers and under your nails. Use antibacterial soap and warm water. Everyone should wash their hands after going to the bathroom, before eating, after touching plants, after touching pets and after touching any body fluids. If soap and water are not available, use an antibacterial liquid sanitizer (like Purell®) if your hands are not visibly dirty.



- ◆ **Pets.** Being around common house pets is safe as long as the pets live in the house and not outdoors. Their shots need to be up to date. It's important to avoid litter boxes, pet poop, birds and reptiles.



- ◆ **Avoid** large crowds until you have been cleared by a member of your transplant team. This includes movie theatres, grocery stores, restaurants, places of worship and other outdoor activities.



- ◆ **Gardening.** You should not work in the yard or dig up soil. There can be harmful bacteria or fungus that may cause an infection due to your weak immune system. You should avoid pesticides, solvents, and fertilizers. Avoid areas where there is freshly mowed grass or hay and construction areas.

- ◆ **Swimming** is not allowed in pools, hot tubs, lakes or oceans until cleared by your transplant team.

Taking Care of Yourself

Mouth care: It's important to keep your teeth, mouth, and gums clean. Brush your teeth with a soft toothbrush or toothette sponge and a mild toothpaste. Gargle or rinse your mouth with saline or saltwater often but most importantly after each meal and at bedtime. Let your team know if you notice sores, white patches or bleeding in your mouth or on your lips. You should not go to the dentist for any dental work including cleanings until your team tells you it is okay. This is usually 6 months after transplant.



Skin Care: Take a shower each day using mild soap and warm water. Use an alcohol-free moisturizing lotion a few times each day to help protect your skin. Some medicines, such as Septra (Bactrim™), can make your skin more sensitive to the sun. Avoid being in the sun between 10:00 am and 5:00 pm. If you need to go outside, wear a hat, sunglasses, long sleeve shirt and pants. Wear **sunscreen** when you are out in the sun and reapply every hour. Use at least a 30 SPF sunscreen that is “PABA free”.



Activity: After your transplant, you may feel more tired than usual or get tired more easily. The time it takes to get your energy back depends on your blood counts, nutrition and activity level. Regular activity will help you get stronger, even if it is only a short walk. Try to do as much as you can for yourself. This will help you get stronger. It's okay to ask for help if needed. Plan your daily schedule so that you can do activities that need more strength earlier in the day. You may not be physically strong enough to return to work for weeks or months after your transplant. During this time, you can do other activities you enjoy that can also help increase your strength.



Medic Alert Bracelet: Your UNC team will give you a Medic Alert bracelet form to complete. When you fill out the form, your bracelet should have the date of your bone marrow transplant and should read “irradiate all blood products”. Let a team member know if you need help with this.



Sexuality: Talk with a member of your transplant team to find out when it's okay to resume sexual activity. You may have sexual intercourse when your platelet count is greater than 50,000 and your absolute neutrophil count (ANC) is greater than 1,000. It's important for you and your partner to wear condoms to avoid infection or a sexually transmitted disease.

Many women and men have a low sex drive after transplant. This is common and may be caused by your illness, recovery time and side effects of the medicines you are taking. Intimacy is an important part of a healthy relationship. Talk with a member of your transplant team if you have any problems.

Changes in Women: Some women have vaginal dryness after a transplant. If this is a problem, use a water-based lubricant to make sex more comfortable. Talk with a team member about lubricants you can use during sex. Many women stop having menstrual cycles or have irregular menstrual cycles. Your transplant doctor may suggest you use estrogen supplements. This depends on your disease and treatment.

Central Line Care: You will go home with your central line. Your BMT nurses will teach you how to take care of your central line at home. In most cases, it will be removed in Radiology before you are released from the BMT Clinic. This is usually 1-2 weeks after hospital discharge from your transplant.

If your central line rips, tears or breaks:

Close your plastic clamps on the catheter. The clamps need to be closed between the exit site and the rip, tear or break on the catheter. Call your UNC BMT Team right away. Be sure that you always keep sharp objects, such as scissors, away from your catheter to prevent a tear, rip or break.

Smoking. Do not smoke or let anyone smoke around you. If you or your caregiver need to quit smoking, please talk to a member of your UNC BMT team.



Nutrition and Food Preparation

- Good nutrition is very important after transplant. It gives your body energy to heal. Eating small frequent meals or snacks 6-8 times per day is the best way to keep up with good nutrition. It's important to include foods from all the basic food groups.
- Changes in taste are very common after a transplant. Things that you liked to eat before may no longer taste good to you. Some medicines may leave a metallic taste in your mouth. Good mouth care, chewing gum or sucking on hard candy can help with this. Don't give up on your favorite foods too soon, as this problem usually goes away with time.
- Eat foods that are high in vitamins, proteins and calories in order to build new healthy cells. Spicy foods and food that have too much acid can irritate your mouth and throat. Greasy foods can be hard to digest and cause diarrhea.
- It may help to keep your food portions small at first or split your meals into smaller ones throughout the day.

*****Please follow general food safety guidelines in the
“Food Safety for Transplant Recipients” FDA/USDA booklet.*****



Wash your hands



Make mealtime social



Keep dishes clean

BMT Outpatient Clinic Visits

After you leave the hospital, your BMT team will continue to follow your recovery very carefully in the outpatient clinic. You will be seen two to three times a week, depending on how you are doing. Your caregiver should be with you at every visit. You will need to wear the N95 mask as you travel to and from the hospital, including the clinic waiting room. You will mainly be seen by an advanced practice provider that works closely with your BMT doctor to manage your care.

Preparing for your Clinic Visits

- **Check-in.** You will need to register on the ground floor of the Cancer Hospital. They will then tell you to come to the BMT Clinic on the second floor of the Cancer Hospital. If you are not feeling well enough to sit in the waiting area, please let the clinic receptionist know so that a clinic nurse can be notified.
- **Blood Draws.** You will have your blood drawn at each clinic visit. The blood tests will change depending on the plan of care the provider has for you. The results will be given to you during or after your visit.
- **Treatments.** Depending on your lab results, you may need treatments like IV fluids, IV medicines, or blood transfusions. You will go to the BMT infusion clinic on the 3rd floor. Depending on the treatment that you need, you may be in clinic for most of the day. Please feel free to bring snack foods and activities in case you need to stay longer than expected.
- **Medicines.** Please bring all of your medicine bottles or an up to date list of your medicines with you to every visit. The nurses will go over all your medicines with you at each visit.

We also encourage you to write down questions you have as they come up at home and bring them with you to each visit. Your BMT team will answer any questions you may have about your care. Always keep your discharge instructions with you as they have important information about your care.

Notes:

Common Questions

Frequently Asked Questions <i>Review = Talk about this with your team</i>	30 days or less since BMT	30 days- 3 months after BMT	3-6 months after BMT	More than 6 months after BMT
Wear a mask in hospital or in crowded areas	Yes	Yes	No	No
Go to school or work in an office	No	No	Yes	Yes
Work with animals (veterinarian, farmers, slaughter house, etc.)**	Avoid	Avoid	Avoid	Review
Carpentry work/ Woodworking	No	No	Yes-gloves & mask	Yes
Household				
Gardening**	Avoid	Avoid	Avoid	Review
Indoor Plants (in place prior to transplant)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mowing the lawn/Raking the leaves**	Avoid	Avoid	Avoid	Review
Household cleaning (vacuuming, dusting)**	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Animals				
New pets/Stray Animals	No	No	No	Yes
Cats/dogs (already in the house)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cat litter box- cleaning**	Avoid	Avoid	Avoid	Review
Reptiles/Birds/Exotic pets	Avoid	Avoid	Avoid	Review
Recreational				
Hot Tub/Swimming (if no IV line)	No	No	No	Yes
Golfing (Wearing Sunscreen)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spectator events (church, movies, games; no hand shaking)	No	No	Yes	Yes
Airline travel	No	No	Review	Yes
Sexual activity (ANC >1.0, Platelets > 50,000)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Drink alcohol (if of legal age)	No	No	Yes	Yes
Operate car or other motorized vehicle	No	Review		
Travel out of the Chapel Hill area by car	Yes-2 weeks after discharge	Yes		
Having 24/7 caregiver	Yes	No		
Exposure to adults or children with viral infections (cold, flu, etc.)	During the first six months following transplant, we recommend staying away from known sick people until their infection is completely gone.			

** Recommend you wear gloves and N95 mask

***If you get more than 1 autologous transplant, review with your team any time period between transplants.

Checklist Before Going Home

We want to make sure you have everything you need at home before you leave the hospital. Go over this list with your team to be sure you have everything.

Know important phone numbers:

- Monday to Friday 8 AM to 4 PM: 984-974-8349
- Nights, weekends and holidays: 984-974-8280 and ask for the “Charge Nurse”

Supplies you need at home:

- Thermometer. Be sure to know how to read it and use it at home.
- Masks and gloves.
- Supplies for central line care.

Medicines:

- Know each medicine you are taking and what it’s for.
- Know how much of each medicine you should take.
- Fill all prescriptions before you leave the hospital.

Foods:

- Know what foods you can and cannot eat.
- Know how to store foods safely.

Safety:

- Know when you should wear a mask.
- Understand the importance of handwashing.
- Know other safety rules about visitors, pets, cleaning house, etc.
- Know the date and time of your next clinic visit.
- Apply for your Medic Alert bracelet.

