



Post-Treatment Instruction for Stem Cell Transplant Patients

Important Phone Numbers for Stem Cell Transplant Program

(518) 262-3804

Monday—Friday
8:30 am—5:00 pm

(518) 265-1189

After 5:00pm,
weekends and holidays

(518) 262-6696

Main NYOH/Albany
Medical Center office

A member of our Stem Cell Transplant Team is always available or on call to answer your questions. If you leave a voicemail, your call will be returned as quickly as possible.



Now that you have completed stem cell transplant, it is important to continue monitoring your health, getting plenty of rest and taking good care of yourself.

The information in this booklet provides helpful guidance and answers to some common questions. It does not replace the

ongoing dialogue with your transplant team—we want to continue communicating with you regularly about your progress.

Remember, your questions and concerns are important to us—and we are here to provide the information, reassurance and assistance you need.

Physical Changes

Shortness of Breath: For the first year following your transplant, report any changes in breathing or cough to the stem cell clinic, as soon as they appear. Some chemotherapy agents may cause lung toxicity. This needs to be treated early to prevent lung damage.

Diarrhea: Report loose stools or diarrhea to the stem cell clinic, especially immediately after discharge from the program. It sometimes takes time for your bowel to heal after transplant. You are more prone to dehydration at this time. When in doubt, call us.

Numbness or Tingling: Some chemotherapy may damage nerves. There are agents that may improve symptoms.

Nail Changes, Discoloration: You may experience some nail changes, such as loss or discoloration.

Memory Loss: Poor concentration will be a short-term effect following transplant. This may be frightening to you. Keep in mind, this has been experienced by other transplant patients and will improve over a few months. Report any signs or symptoms of persistent headache to the stem cell clinic.

Immunizations: You must renew all immunizations beginning 12 months after your transplant. Please contact us 11 months after your transplant to get the immunizations at NYOH, or your primary oncologist. Avoid exposure to anyone having received a live virus vaccine (activated oral polio, measles, mumps, rubella and BCG) for at least three months.

Fatigue, Activity and Exercise

It is common to continue to feel some fatigue in the later months of your recovery. Despite fatigue, it is important to stay as active as possible. Your strength and endurance will increase over time. Pace yourself. Take frequent breaks to restore your energy. Low impact exercise such as walking or the stationary bike may help you regain your energy level. This does take time. Be patient with yourself.



Avoid swimming in natural bodies of water, public swimming pools or hot tubs for several months until your immune system has fully recovered. If your immune system is fully recovered and your private pool is well maintained, you may swim after day + 100. If you are going away on vacation, just check with the stem cell clinic before you leave regarding swimming.

Nutrition

Taste and appetite will eventually return. Keep small snacks with you and eat frequently throughout the day. Please consult the stem cell clinic regarding starting any herbal supplements. Some may interact with your medications and may be harmful to your immune system.



Emotions

As a patient, you have been coming to the stem cell clinic daily for about six weeks to receive care and support from the physician, nurses and staff. Though you are probably excited to have completed your transplant, it is also normal to experience apprehension upon being discharged from the program.



You can use the stem cell clinic as a resource for transplant related issues. We always love to hear from you. We also encourage you to call your primary oncologist with any other concerns you have, and of course, if they cannot answer your questions, feel free to use the stem cell clinic.

You and your caregiver/family may be fearful about your cancer recurring. This is normal and experienced by many transplant patients. You will be followed closely by the stem cell clinic and then by your primary oncologist.

It is important to know what signs may indicate that you need to call your primary oncologist. It is good to know when to worry, and then remember to enjoy the day without worry if you have no signs or symptoms that your cancer has come back. We know it's been a while since you have had "normal" days. Enjoy them!

Sexuality

Cancer and cancer treatment can affect your sexual relationships. Keep the avenues of communication open with your partner. After discharge from the clinic, if your white count and platelet count are in a safe range per your physician, you may have intercourse with use of a condom. Continue to use condoms until Day +60. Some problems associated with cancer treatment may include:

Impotence: Most men on chemotherapy still have normal erections. Erectile function and changes in sexual desire will recover soon, after treatment.

Sterility: Patients who undergo transplant are usually sterile. You should not count on this as a method of contraception. The effect of high dose chemotherapy on fetal development is not known.

Premature menopause: Most women experience hot flashes and vaginal dryness. Ask your doctor about medications for hot flashes if it becomes uncomfortable. For vaginal dryness, try water-based lubricants, such as KY gel, Astroglide or Replens.

Pets and Plants

As part of general cleanliness and hygiene requirements, it is recommended that you avoid handling plants in the first 100 days following transplant. You should avoid contact with soil, lawn waste or compost.

It is recommended that you limit your contact with animals and household pets during the first 100 days post

transplant. Always wash your hands after having contact with your pet. Do not let your dog drink from the toilet bowl. During this time, you should not clean up after pets or touch any animal excrement. It is particularly important to avoid cat litter boxes and birdcages. Avoid all contact with reptiles. We know it may be difficult but delegate all pet care to a friend or family member.

Discharge Medications

One week after discharge from the stem cell clinic, you will start an antibiotic called Bactrim DS. Take this with a big glass of water on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. This antibiotic helps prevent a specific pneumonia that you are at risk of developing after your transplant. This medication can lower your blood counts. That is one reason for weekly blood work after discharge. This medication continues for six months.

Continue to take your regular medications—the ones you were taking prior to transplant. If you are unsure about medications, please ask us.

Follow Up Visits

We will schedule you for visits alternating with your primary oncologist. You will need weekly CBCs for at least one month post transplant. We will schedule the blood work where it is most convenient for you. You will need to resume checking in at the reception desk and the lab, prior to your appointments.

We hope this information has been helpful. It's not intended to replace ongoing dialogue with the transplant team but rather, to continue to build a strong foundation for communications and understanding. Remember, all questions are important and we're here to provide you with the information and assistance you need. Please feel free to call the office at (518) 262-6696.



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▲ United in Healing with The US Oncology Network

Stem Cell Transplant at
Albany Medical Center

(518) 262-6696

ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS

Albany

(518) 489-0044

Amsterdam

(518) 843-0020

Clifton Park

(518) 831-4434

Hudson

(518) 822-8484

Rexford

(518) 399-4600

Troy

(518) 272-2097