

## What happens if you're a matching marrow donor?

### There are 2 ways to donate marrow or stem cells for a patient in need:

#### Peripheral Blood Stem-Cell (PBSC) Donation (75% of the time) or Needle Aspiration (25% of the time)

Donors don't get to choose the donation method and should be fully committed to donating through whatever method will give the patient the best chance of survival. This is a long-term commitment because you will stay in the registry until your 61<sup>st</sup> birthday.

- 1. Join the Marrow Registry.** [www.dkmsamericas.org](http://www.dkmsamericas.org) . [www.marrows.org](http://www.marrows.org) . [www.giftoflife.org](http://www.giftoflife.org) . [www.marrowsdonation.org](http://www.marrowsdonation.org)  
Anyone age 18 - 60 who meets the health guidelines can join. You can join for FREE online at: [www.dkmsamericas.org](http://www.dkmsamericas.org) and in the Pittsburgh area, you can join for free anytime you donate blood at the Central Blood Bank. Volunteers should be committed to helping any patient. To join, simply complete a short health questionnaire and sign a form stating that you understand what it means to be listed on the marrow registry. Then, a swab of cheek cells is taken to determine your HLA tissue type. This information is then added to the marrow registry. DKMS Americas will actually send you the cheek swab testing kit in the mail! It's never been easier to join. ☺
- 2. Stay committed and available.** Doctors search the Registry to find a donor whose tissue type matches their patient's. If you are chosen, your donor center will contact you. If you agree, more testing will be scheduled. \*Please inform the registry of your new address if you move. It can mean the difference between life and death for a patient in need.
- 3. Attend an information session.** You will meet with staff from your donor center to learn about the donation process, risks and side effects. You are free to bring a friend or family member. You will also be told which source of blood-forming cells is being requested - either collected from the marrow or from the circulating blood (PBSC donation). You will then decide whether or not to donate.
- 4. Receive a physical exam.** If you agree to donate, you will be given a physical exam to discover if donating would pose any special risks to you or the patient. The exam and all expenses associated with donating will be paid by the donor center.



**5. PBSC Donation by apheresis-(75% of the time)** This is now the most common donation method, used by doctors 75% of the time. The same life-saving *blood stem cells* found in bone marrow also exist in our blood. To increase the number of blood-forming stem cells in the bloodstream, donors receive daily injections of a drug called filgrastim for five days before the collection. Your blood is then filtered through a machine that separates out the blood-forming cells in a process called apheresis. The remaining blood is returned to the donor.

**6. Side effects and recovery:** You may experience minor flu-like symptoms, such as headache, or bone or muscle aches for several days before donation. This is a side effect of the filgrastim injections that you receive to increase the number of blood-forming stem cells in the bloodstream. These effects disappear shortly after the collection.

**7. Follow-up:** Your marrow donor center coordinator will follow up with you until you are able to resume normal activity. You will also receive annual calls for long-term follow-up.

**5. Marrow donation by needle aspiration-(25% of the time)** Marrow donation by needle aspiration is a surgical procedure, usually performed on an outpatient basis. It is becoming less common, but is still used in 25% of cases, usually when the recipient is a child. While under anesthesia, doctors use a hollow needle to remove a small amount of marrow from the back of your pelvic bone. The procedure lasts between 45 and 90 minutes.

**6. Side effects and recovery:** You can expect to feel some soreness in your lower back for a few days or longer. Your doctor will prescribe pain medicine before you leave the hospital. Most donors are back to their normal routine in a few days. Marrow is constantly regenerating itself and is replaced in 4 to 6 weeks.

**7. Follow-up:** Your marrow donor center coordinator will follow up with you until you are able to resume normal activity. You will also receive annual calls for long-term follow-up.

#### Learn More About the Marrow Registry:

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[www.deenasfriends4acure.org/marrows.html](http://www.deenasfriends4acure.org/marrows.html)