

# What's the Next Step?



Committed Donors.  
Successful Transplants.



National Marrow Donor Program®

# What is the Next Step?

You have joined the National Marrow Donor Program® (NMDP) in a partnership to save lives. We take this partnership seriously and hope you do, too. Your commitment began with the blood sample you gave at recruitment. You may be matched with a patient until your 61st birthday.

Your next step is to be an active, committed donor. That means staying in touch with your Donor Center and staying up to date on the latest donation procedures. The NMDP is committed to keeping you informed of new developments and of the steps you will go through if you are matched with a patient and asked to donate. Look for our informative annual newsletter and other educational mailings.

When patients are searching for a matching donor, time is essential. There have been a number of cases where perfect tissue matches did not result in transplants because the donors could not be found, had become medically ineligible or had changed their mind about donating. This gives false hope to searching patients.

# What is My Commitment?

We hope your active commitment will be maintained in these three ways:

1. Read *The Marrow Messenger*, your annual newsletter.
2. Keep your Donor Center informed of any address changes, health changes that affect your eligibility and changes in your decision to be listed on the Registry.
3. Respond quickly to any phone calls or mailings from your Donor Center.

The NMDP is aware there are circumstances that cause donors to be unavailable when called upon. As a volunteer donor, you are never under any form of legal obligation. Individual decisions are always respected. If your willingness to consider blood stem cell donation changes, please inform your Donor Center before you are identified as a match. You can find your Donor Center's contact information on the back of this booklet or at [www.marrow.org](http://www.marrow.org).

**When Patients Are Searching  
the Registry, Time and Donor  
Availability Are Essential.**

# When Will I Hear From My Donor Center?

## You Will Hear From Your Donor Center For At Least Two Reasons:

1. To provide you with more educational materials about the blood stem cell donation process.
2. To notify you that you are a match for a patient.

At least once each year you will receive the NMDP's *The Marrow Messenger* newsletter. We ask that you take some time to read the information and recommit yourself to your decision to be listed on the NMDP Registry. If you do not receive the newsletter, please do the following:

1. Call your NMDP Donor Center and update your address or other personal information. (See the back of this booklet for the Center's phone number.)
2. If you have any trouble reaching your Donor Center, contact the NMDP Coordinating Center office at 1-800-526-7809.

If you hear from your Donor Center because you have been identified as a match, you can expect to go through several stages.

# What Happens After My Donor Center Calls Me?

## Stage One:

### Preliminary Match (DR Testing)

The Donor Center contacts you to tell you that you're a preliminary match for a patient. During this call, the Donor Center makes sure that you are still interested in donating and answers any of your questions.

Stage one means four of your six tissue typing markers match a patient needing a blood stem cell transplant. This stage is often referred to as DR testing.

The DR testing is a blood test that identifies the last two tissue typing markers that are needed for a total match. The results of this test usually take about four weeks, but can occasionally be shorter. (Note: This stage is skipped for donors who already have their DR type in the Registry.)



**Committed Donors.  
Successful Transplants.**

# What if I am a Blood Stem Cell Match for a Patient?

## **Stage Two: Confirmatory Typing**

If your last two tissue typing markers confirm that you are still a possible match for the patient, your Donor Center will contact you. You may be one of only a few donors that match this patient, or you may be one of many.

During this second stage phone call, the Donor Center explains what it means to be a match for a patient and makes sure you are in general good health.

Additional blood testing is then scheduled. Several tubes of blood are drawn from you and sent to the Transplant Center to be tested in conjunction with the patient's blood to confirm that you are indeed a match.

## **Stage Three: Donor Workup**

If, after the additional blood tests, the patient's physician chooses you as the best possible donor, your Donor Center will contact you to schedule an information session with you and your friends and family members, the medical director and/or the Donor Center coordinator. The session takes about 90 minutes.

During the session, you are fully educated on the two types of donation processes:

**1. Marrow**

During marrow donation, the blood stem cells are collected from the donor during a surgical procedure using a special needle inserted into the hip bone.

**2. Peripheral Blood Stem Cell (PBSC)**

For PBSC, the donor is given a growth factor drug that increases the number of stem cells released into the blood stream. After receiving the growth factor, peripheral blood stem cells can be collected through the process of apheresis.

Before you leave your information session, you are scheduled for a physical examination. The exam determines if you have any medical condition that would endanger you or the potential recipient as a result of donating blood stem cells.

If the physical confirms your eligibility, you are then asked to sign an intent to donate marrow or a consent form for PBSC. Once you sign the form, the patient is told he/she has a matched donor and the target date is set for your donation.

# Please Be Ready for the Call

## You Could Be the Vital Piece!

You may be called for any patient at any time. Patients from all over the world are searching the NMDP Registry for marrow and blood stem cell donors every day, and they are counting on you to be willing and accessible.

Thank you for your commitment to helping patients.

If you have changes that affect your general health, personal commitment to the Registry, or your phone number or address changes, please call your local Donor Center. Your local Donor Center contact information is listed below.

**Thank You For  
Your Commitment**



National Marrow Donor Program®  
1-800-MARROW-2  
[www.marrow.org](http://www.marrow.org)