

PATIENT GUIDE TO STEM CELL HARVEST IN THE APHERESIS UNIT

On your first visit to the Apheresis Unit, you will undergo a pre-donation evaluation. At this evaluation, we will take your medical history and perform a brief physical exam. Please bring a copy of all medications you are taking. We will draw blood for several tests, including a Complete Blood Count (CBC) and CD34 count. It will take about two hours for the exam and to get the lab results. We will ask you to wait until we have the CBC results. Your CD34 test, which is a measure of the level of bone marrow stem cells in your blood, will be ready by late afternoon. One of the Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT) nurses will communicate your CD34 test results to you.

Once your CD34 level is adequate or if you have a scheduled dose of Mozobil, you will have an apheresis catheter placed in the Interventional Radiology Unit before your first collection. The catheter is what we attach to our apheresis machine in order to collect your cells. After you receive your catheter, you should report to the Apheresis Unit in person. If possible, you will have your first collection on the same day that you get your catheter. We will begin daily apheresis stem cell collections, check your CBC daily, and tally the number of CD34 cells we obtain with each collection. Depending on the results of your CBC, you may require a transfusion of blood or platelets. On subsequent days, you will be given an appointment time of either 8 or 11 a.m. We will do our best to accommodate your needs. Most patients come daily, or every other day, except for weekends and holidays, until the collection goal is met. One of the BMT nurses will inform you every evening of your results. On average, patients generally require 3 to 5 days (collections) to reach their goal, but some patients finish their collection sooner, or take longer.

Please make sure you continue taking your Neupogen (and Mozobil if indicated), as directed by BMT, until you have reached your collection goal. If you take blood pressure medication it is important to know that a class known as ACE inhibitors, must be discontinued at least 24 hours before your first collection. You should discuss this issue with our apheresis resident at the time of your pre-donation evaluation.

In the Apheresis Unit you may have one guest at your bedside. You are encouraged to bring snacks or a meal with you. We advise you to keep fluids to a minimum until the procedure is over as you cannot leave the bed to use the restroom. At the same time, we recommend you drink plenty of water the evening before collections to keep well hydrated. You are welcome to read, watch TV, bring a portable CD player, sleep, or otherwise entertain yourself during this approximately three hour period.

An anticoagulant called citrate is used during the apheresis procedure. A common side effect of citrate is tingling around the mouth and fingers, or generally throughout the body. You can offset this by increasing calcium in your diet (milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, etc.) In addition, we will offer you Tums to help with this side effect. If the tingling is not relieved by Tums we can also provide intravenous calcium.

We will flush your catheter lines daily (Monday through Friday), and change your dressing every other day or more if necessary. Do not get this area wet (no shower) as it puts you at greater risk of infection. In some circumstances we will remove the catheter for you after the last collection. If you have a catheter that cannot be removed in the apheresis unit, the bone marrow transplant group (BMT) will arrange for removal.

Please feel free to write your questions down in advance of each visit so that we can be sure to address all of your concerns.