Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Staying Active During Stem Cell Transplant

This information will help you understand how you can be active during your stem cell transplant and how your healthcare team can help.

Part of your stem cell treatment plan is to stay active every day. Your exercise and activity program will keep you safe while keeping you active.

Importance of Physical Activity During Your Transplant

Physical activity is important because it helps you be as healthy as possible during your transplant.

Exercise and movement can help you:

- Keep your muscles strong
- Keep your body flexible
- Keep your heart and lungs healthy
- Reduce stress and make you feel better
- Improve your sleep

Being in the hospital will reduce your normal level of activity. Your mobility (ability to move) and strength are very easy to lose if they're not used. People who don't stay active during their transplants take more time to recover. It also takes them longer to go back to their usual activities or their home life.

You'll need to be much more active during this hospital stay than you may have

been during other hospital stays. Activity and exercise will be an important part of your daily treatment while you're in the hospital. You will work with your healthcare team to set daily and weekly activity goals. They'll also help you stay active even while you have side effects from your treatment, giving you help as needed.

The Role of Your Physical Therapist (PT)

Physical therapists (PTs) work to improve and maintain your movement and ability to do exercise. Your PT will work with you to help you with any of the following things:

- Getting in and out of bed
- Walking
- Climbing stairs
- Exercises for strength and balance
- Exercises to improve your energy and ability to do physical activity
- Your ideas:

Then they will work with you to create a program to meet your activity needs.

The Role of Your Occupational Therapist (OT)

Occupational therapists (OTs) work to improve your ability to do everyday activities. Your OT will work with you to help with any of the following things:

- Dressing
- Bathing
- Eating
- Going to the bathroom
- Taking care of your physical appearance or other self-care
- Memory exercises
- Doing things you enjoy, or your hobbies (such as reading, knitting, puzzles)

- Using electronics and social media
- Your ideas:

Then they work with you to create a program to meet your activity needs.

The Role of Your Nursing Team

Your nurses will work with you to:

- Check your physical activity daily.
- Set goals with you and your therapists.
- Help you with your daily activities, such as bathing and walking.
- Remind and encourage you to meet your daily goals.
- Your ideas:

Ways to Stay Active During Your Transplant

- Try to only stay in bed when you're sleeping. While you're awake, you should be sitting up in a chair, walking around, or spending time outside your room, as allowed by your healthcare provider.
- Play an active role in your daily and weekly activity goals by talking with your nurse or rehabilitation therapist about what activities you want to do for the day and for the week.
- Perform daily self-care on your own or with help when needed.
- Take part in activities that you would also do at home, such as reading, sending emails to friends and family, doing puzzles, practicing yoga, or stretching.
- Your ideas:

Exercises and activities you can do

There are also some exercises that you can do while you're in the hospital. You can do some of these from your bed, your chair, or while standing. Read the resources below for more information:

- *Stem Cell Transplant Exercise Program: Level 1* (www.mskcc.org/pe/stem-cell-exercise-lv1)
- *Stem Cell Transplant Exercise Program: Level 2* (www.mskcc.org/pe/stem-cell-exercise-lv2)
- *Stem Cell Transplant Arm and Shoulder Exercise Program* (www.mskcc.org/pe/stem-cell-arm-shoulder-exercise)
- *Stem Cell Transplant Stretching Program* (www.mskcc.org/pe/stem-cell-stretching)
- *Managing Cancer-Related Fatigue* (www.mskcc.org/pe/managing-fatigue)
- *Improving Your Memory* (www.mskcc.org/pe/improving-memory)

What to avoid

It should be safe for you to get out of bed and be active. Speak with your medical team to confirm if you're able to do so. If your blood counts are low, your physical activities may need to change. Your healthcare team will tell you what your blood counts are and what activities you can do.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

Staying Active During Stem Cell Transplant - Last updated on June 25, 2021
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