

Transplant Process and Timeline for Sickle Cell Disease



Medical tests and appointments

2 weeks to a few months before transplant

- You'll have medical tests, such as:
 - Imaging scans
 - Blood tests
 - Heart and lung tests
 - Dental check-up
- You may see different doctors, including a pain specialist.
- A stem cell donor is chosen and approved.
- You might want to save your eggs or sperm. This can take up to 3 to 4 months. You must do this before your transplant.



Pre-transplant immune suppression, if needed

About 70 days before transplant

- You'll have a red cell exchange transfusion. This is done so you have fewer sickle cells in your body, which lowers your risk for pain and problems.
- You may have a central line placed before your red cell exchange transfusion.
- You'll take immunosuppressive medicine for about 5 days, usually over 2 cycles. Your doctor may add other medicines if needed.
- This part usually happens in the hospital.



Hospital stay for transplant

About 6 to 8 weeks

- You'll start your conditioning treatment 9 to 12 days before getting your stem cells.
- You'll feel side effects from the conditioning treatment:
 - Mouth sores
 - Nausea (feeling like you're going to throw up)
 - Pain
 - Your blood counts may be low. You may need transfusions.
 - You'll have a high risk of infection.
- New stem cells usually start working in about 12 to 30 days after transplant.
- You'll go home or to the Ronald McDonald House after discharge.



After you leave the hospital

Early recovery (discharge to 6 months)

- Your blood counts and immune system are still recovering.
- You'll take medicine to prevent infection and graft versus host disease (GvHD).
- You'll have appointments with your transplant team 1 to 3 times each week for the first 3 months after discharge.

Late recovery (6 months and later)

- Your immune system is mostly recovered. You can go back to your normal activities.
- Some problems can still happen later.
- You may need vaccines again.
- You'll have long-term follow-up care.



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