

Post Autologous Transplants: Guidelines for Home

For patients who are being discharged after having an autologous bone marrow transplant



In this booklet you will find:

Useful tips and instructions that you can follow every day as you recover from an autologous bone marrow transplant. Topics include:

- Fever and Infection
- Activities and Exercise
- Sexual Health and Intimacy
- Nutrition and Fluids
- Medications

Simcoe Muskoka
Regional Cancer Program



Royal Victoria
Regional Health Centre

A Cancer Care Ontario Partner

Fever and Infection

You have a fever if your temperature taken by mouth (oral temperature) is:

38.3°C (100.9°F) or higher at any time
OR
38.0°C (100.4°F) or higher for at least one hour

To protect yourself from contacting germs that can make you sick:

- Wash your hands and/or use hand sanitizer. Especially:
 - After using the toilet
 - When you come in from outside
 - Before and after you eat
- Stay away from people who are sick

If you get a fever:

- You should **not** take Tylenol. This is because Tylenol only “hides” a fever and does not stop the infection. If you start to feel sick, you should contact your cancer care team and they can tell you what to do. If you are not able to get ahold of somebody from your cancer care team, you should go to the emergency room.

If you feel pain (like a headache):

- You should take your temperature before you take Tylenol. This will help you to know if you are sick before you take a medication that could hide it.

Activities and Exercise

You should:

- Try to walk every day. It will help you to recover, get stronger and prevent infections.
- Protect your skin from the sun: Wear a hat when you are outside (even when it is overcast) because the sun can hurt your skin and make you sick.
- Listen to your body and rest when you are tired. This will help you to recover and stop you from getting sick.
- Wear gloves if you garden to protect your hands from scrapes and cuts that can get infected.
- Ask another member of your family to take care of your pets. You should not touch animal droppings.

Sexual Health and Intimacy

- After your transplant, you are at risk for infection and bleeding. This is because your blood counts are low.

You should avoid:

- Having sexual intercourse (vaginal and anal) until your platelet count is at least 50,000/cubic mL. This is because sexual intercourse can cause tears in the skin of your vagina, penis and anus that will bleed if your platelets are low.
- Any sexual practices where your mouth could come into contact with stool (poop). This is because you are also at-risk for infections until your blood counts return to normal.

You should:

- Use latex condoms during sexual activity to protect yourself from sexually transmitted diseases (like HIV, hepatitis and herpes). This is especially true when you are recovering from a transplant. Some medications can be passed to your partner during sexual activity so using a condom will also protect them.
- Ask your healthcare team for a Sexual Health, Intimacy and Cancer (SHIC) brochure. Having questions about sexual health is common after having a transplant. The Simcoe Muskoka Regional Cancer Program runs the SHIC clinic that can help you with any questions or concerns you might have.
- To book a confidential appointment, call 705-728-9090 x43520

Nutrition and Fluids

You should:

- Drink at least 8 glasses (2 litres) of non-caffeinated fluids every day. You can get your water from things like jello, water or herbal tea. This will help you to stay hydrated (cells in your body full of water).
- Eat a well-balanced diet of food that is cooked well and avoid fast foods. This will help your body to recover from the surgery and give it the nutrition that it needs to fight infections.
- Wash fruits and vegetables well before eating them because some foods carry germs that can make you sick. After a transplant, you are at-risk for getting an infection (getting sick).

Note: If you get constipated, you should not use suppositories or enemas because they can make you sick if your blood counts are low.

For more detailed information please refer to the handout called “Food Safety”

Medications

You should:

- Take your medications as prescribed. They will help you to recover from your transplant.
- Get a refill on your pain medication before you take the last pill. This will help to prevent you from experiencing a pain crisis.
- Use anti-nausea medication (like ondansetron or dimenhydrinate) as soon as you feel nauseous. This will give you a better chance of controlling it before it gets out of control.

Notes

Lined writing area consisting of 30 horizontal lines.



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Regional Health Centre

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Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre
Simcoe Muskoka Regional Cancer Centre
201 Georgian Drive
Barrie, ON L4M 6M2
Phone: 705-728-9090 x43333

www.rvh.on.ca

