



Blood Cell Transplants: Autografts

A booklet for Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander patients and their families

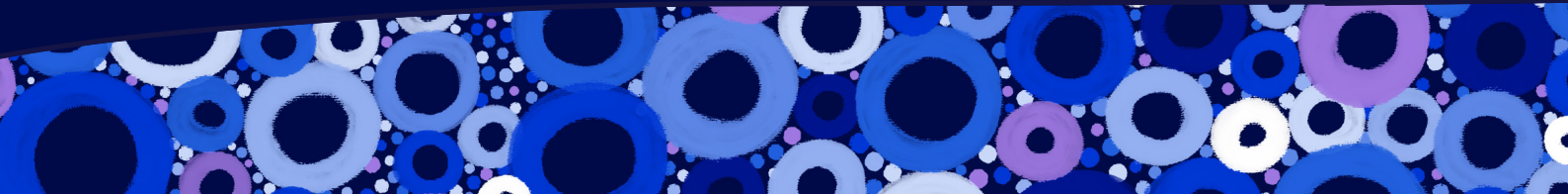
Book Four

Text & Illustrations by Simone Thomason

Cover artwork by Navada Currie

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The author sincerely acknowledges and pays respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Traditional Owners, past, present and emerging, on whose land these booklets have been developed and gives thanks for their on-going willingness to share their knowledge and wisdom.



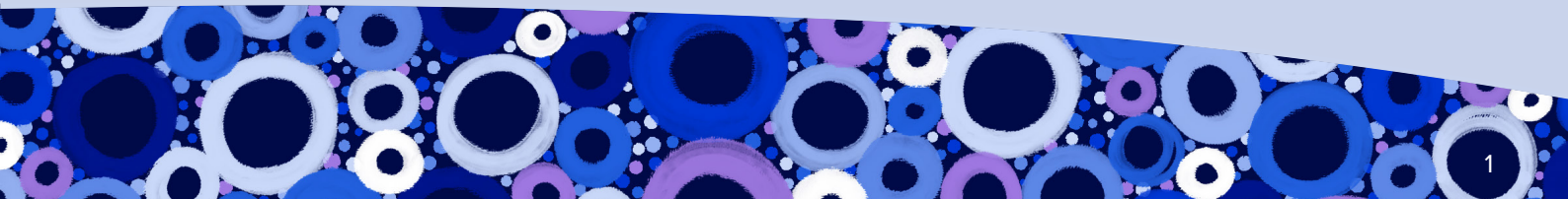
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Blood Cell Transplants: Autografts, A Booklet for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and their families, is book four in a series of five educational booklets. The booklets are primarily visual teaching tools, designed to meet the comprehension needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, diagnosed with a blood cancer, and their families. This resource may also benefit all patients, including cultural and linguistically diverse people groups whose main language is not English.

Disclaimer: This booklet is not intended to provide or be a replacement for medical advice.

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Cover artwork © Navada Currie, 2022.

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The Leukaemia Foundation uses real-life stories to provide education, inspiration and hope. If you have an experience of blood cancer you'd like to share, please email storyhub@leukaemia.org.au

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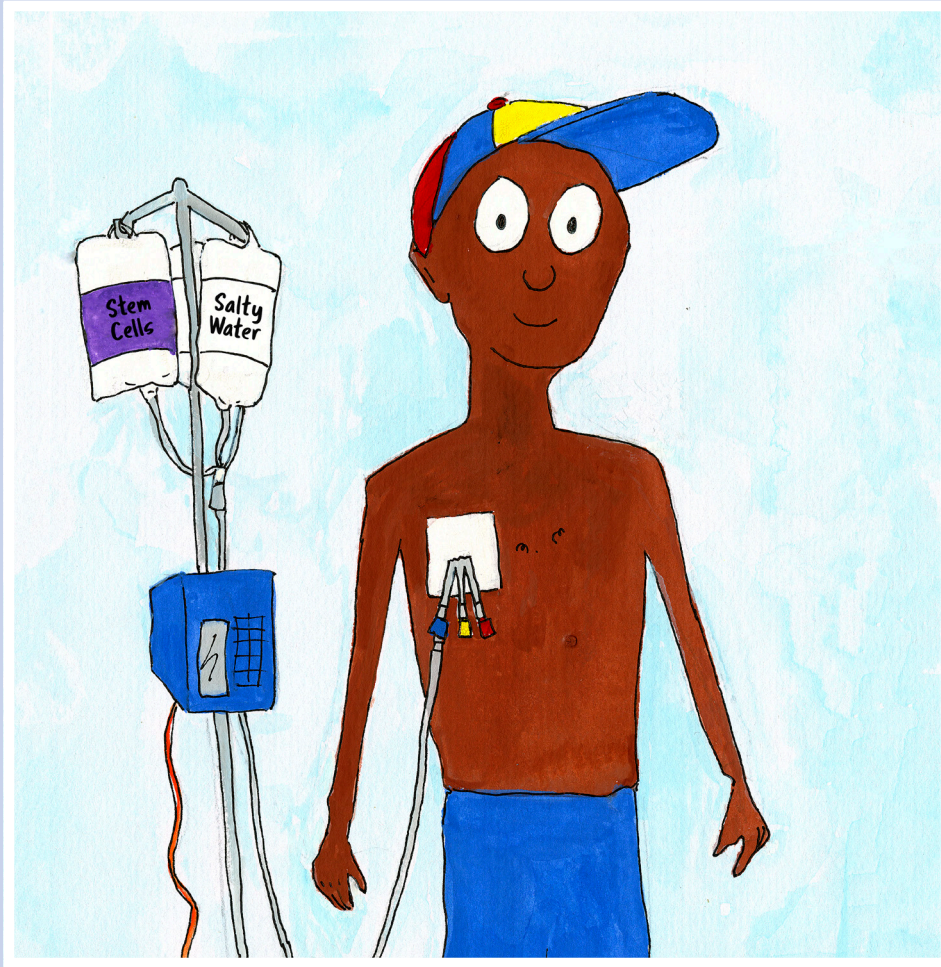
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The next treatment

The doctors, blood nurse, ILO and interpreter will sit with you and your family and talk about the next treatment, called a young blood cell transplant.

Your family back home can be on the TV link or phone.





What is a young blood cell transplant?

Some blood cancers are hard to get rid of with just chemo. So, you will need a young blood cell transplant also called a **stem cell transplant**.

The word transplant means to swap one thing with another. This transplant means your blood is collected then given back to you, after chemo to help you get well.

Where will you have the transplant?

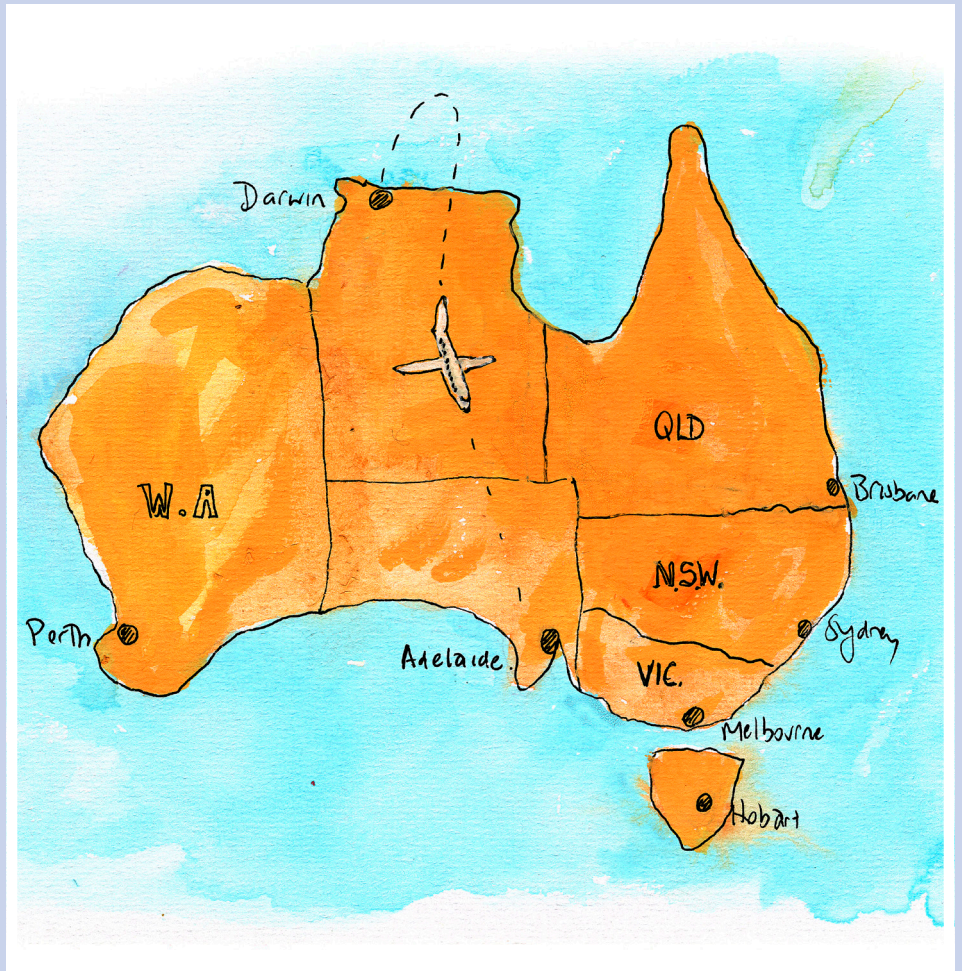
This transplant may not be able to be given to you in the hospital where you are.

Hospitals in the large cities do the transplants. They have more people there to help.

Transplants can take weeks to months to do.

You and a family member will leave country and travel to the transplant hospital.

When you get there, you will stay in a hostel near the hospital.





Your transplant team

You will meet another hospital team called the “transplant” team, they will be expecting you.

They will explain what will happen to you and your family.

You will talk to these doctors and nurses over the TV link before you travel for the transplant.

There will be church ministers, language speakers - interpreters and ILOs to help you there too.

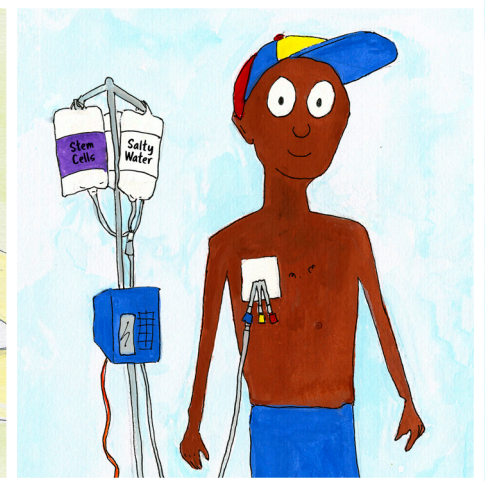
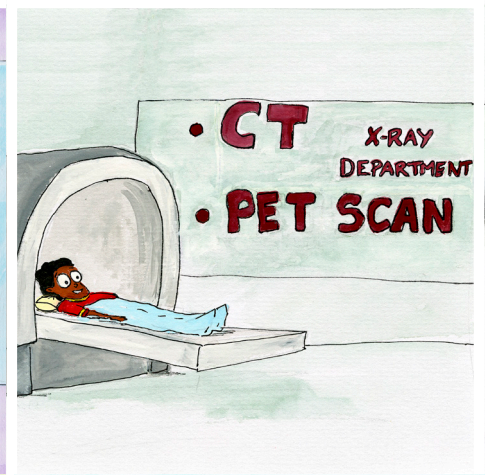
What next?

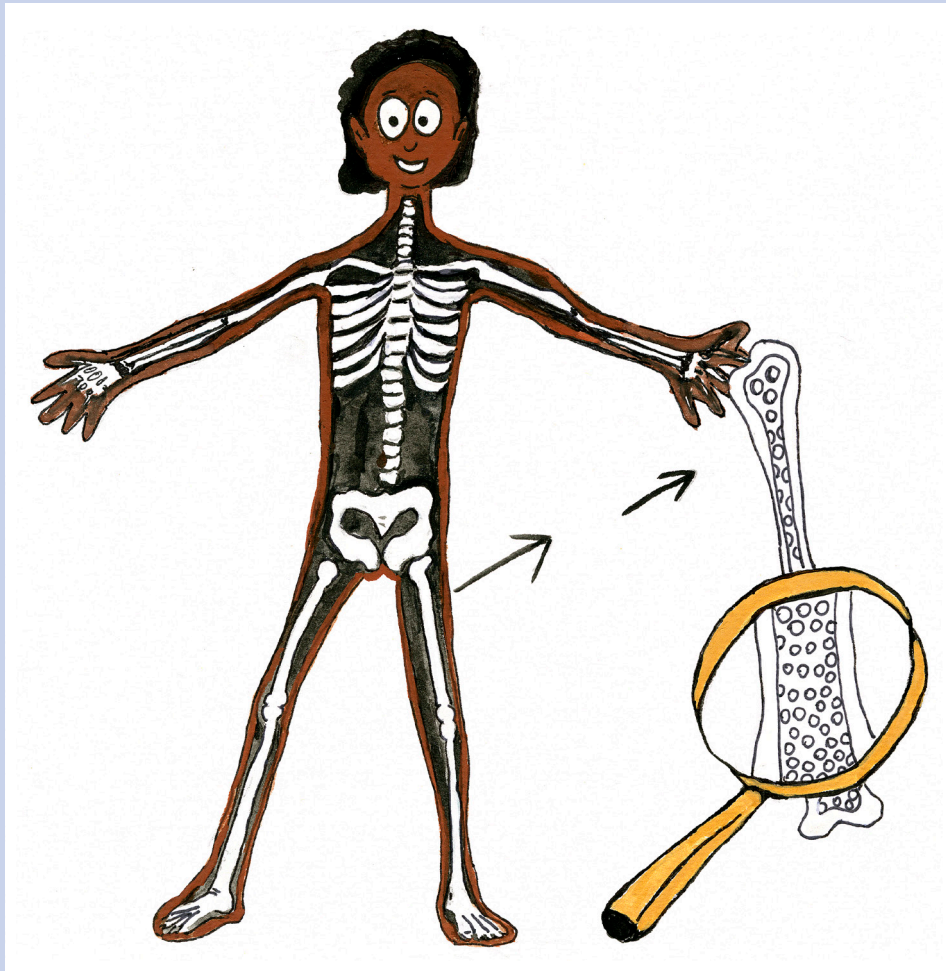
In the transplant hospital you will have more scans and tests before the transplant starts.

After everything has been told to you, you will need to sign a consent form for the transplant.

You will have more chemo and get a special tube inserted into your chest for this chemo.

You may have chemo in the day unit or in the hospital room, the transplant nurse will tell you where.





Using your young blood cells

The young blood cells that live inside your large bones are special cells called stem cells which can grow to be any blood cell your body needs.

These young blood cells don't have the cancer in them.

Collecting the young blood cells

You will need to have special medicine through a needle given under the skin every day for a few days.

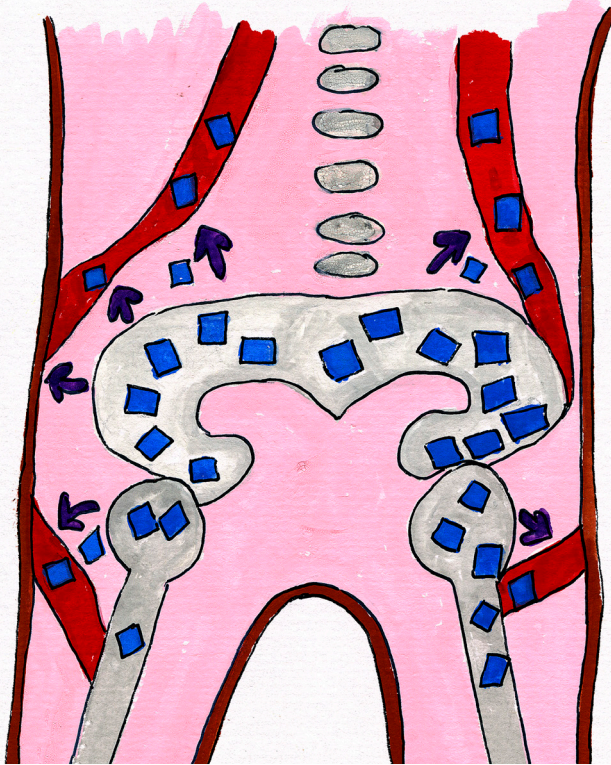
You can give yourself the needles or the nurse can do it for you.

This medicine works on your bones and moves the young blood cells from your bones into your blood.

This medicine can make your bones a bit achy. The nurses will give you pain relief tablets for the ache.



■ - A Stem cell.



Young blood cells

This picture shows the inside of your body, where the young blood cells are moving out of your hip bones and into your blood in your veins.

You will have blood tests every day, to see when you have enough young blood cells in your blood.

A special machine

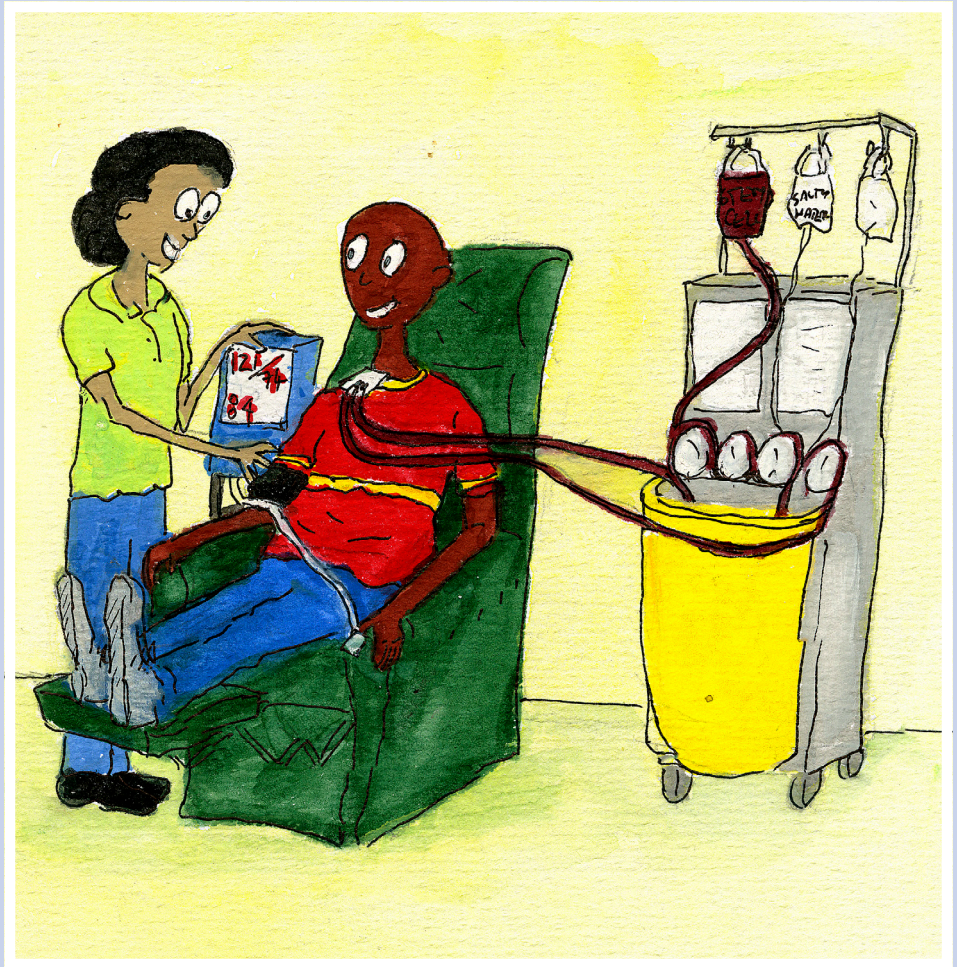
When you have enough young/ stem cells in your blood you go onto a machine, like the one in this picture. Your family member can be with you when you are on the machine.

Being on the machine does not hurt you.

This machine spins your blood and separates a small amount of your young blood cells into a bag.

You will need to be attached to the machine for a few hours over 1-3 days.

A tube may be put in your neck to help collect your cells.





Chemo

After the machine you have a few days rest, before having chemo in the day unit.

Then you go into hospital and your bag of young blood cells (stem cells) will be given back to you.

You will be in a special room to protect you from germs.

Your family won't be able to stay in hospital with you, but they can visit every day.

You will be in hospital for weeks, to heal from the chemo.

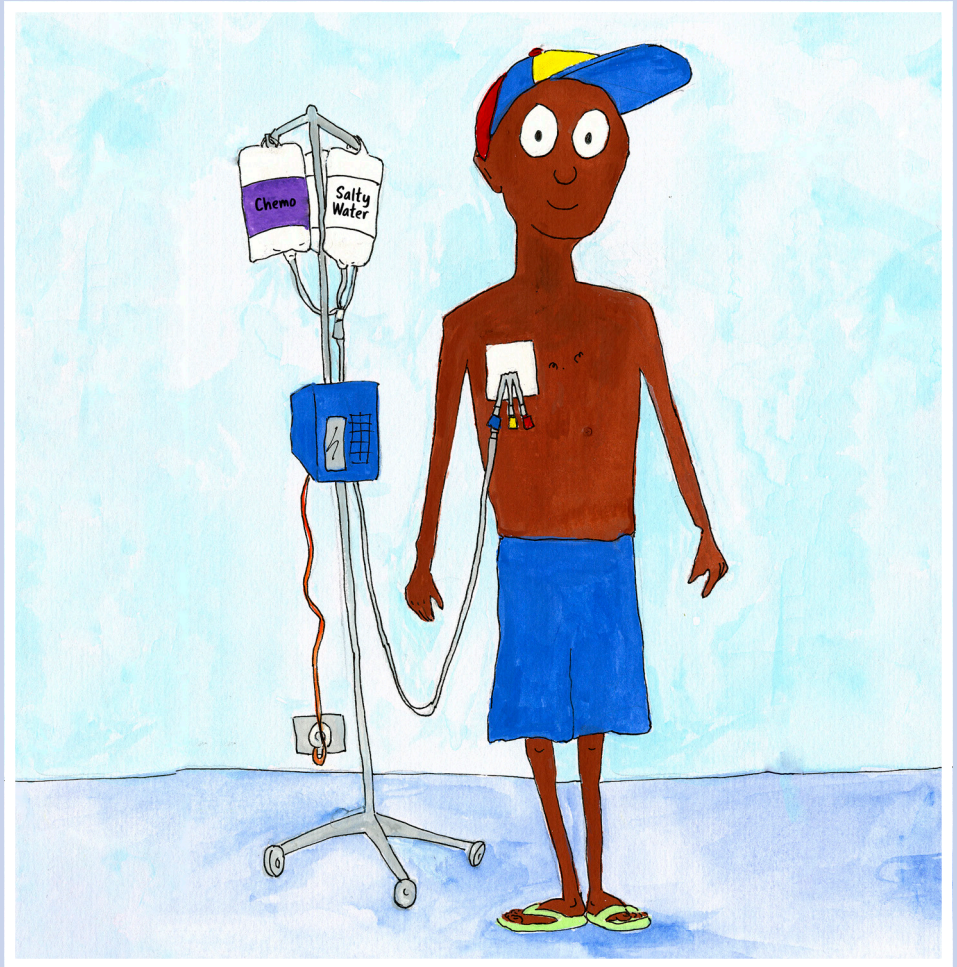
The chemo can make you feel tired, you may have mouth sores, vomit, or get runny poos.

The nurses will give you medicines to help you get better.

A special tube

Before the chemo and stem cells are given to you, a special tube (Hickman catheter) will need to be inserted into a vein in your chest.

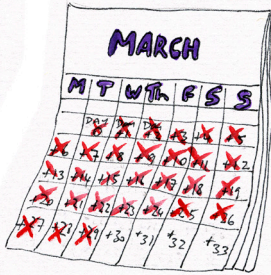
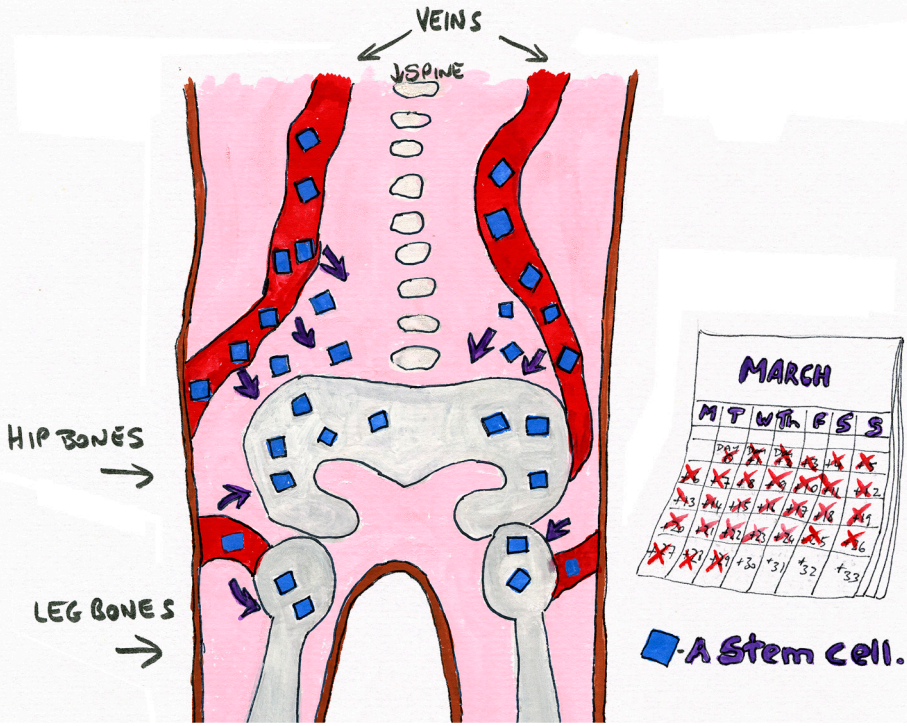
You will have medicine to numb the area before the tube is put in.



Day 0



Day + 30



■ - A Stem Cell.

What your young blood cells do

Day 0 is the day you get your stem cells given back to you.

Day 1 onwards is the time the young blood cells move from your blood back into your bones.

When the stem cells are in your bones, they grow older and go to work.

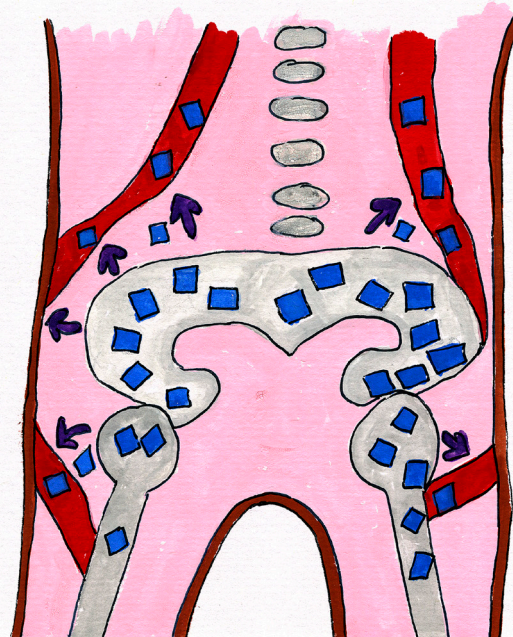
Working young blood cells

It will take a month or more for your cells to start working.

You will stay in hospital until you have enough working cells.

You will need to have bags of blood to keep you strong while you wait for your young blood cells to work.

Day +30



Staying well

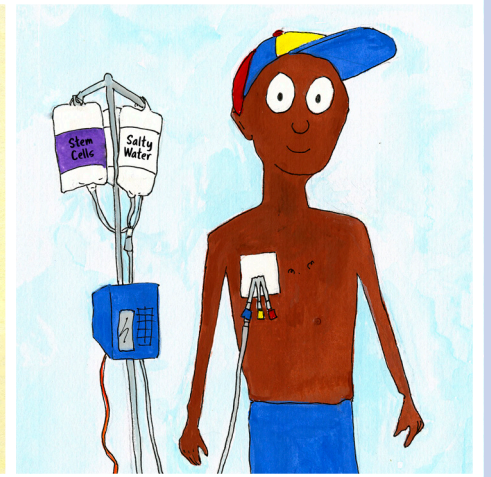
You will need to do all the same things you did when you first had chemo.

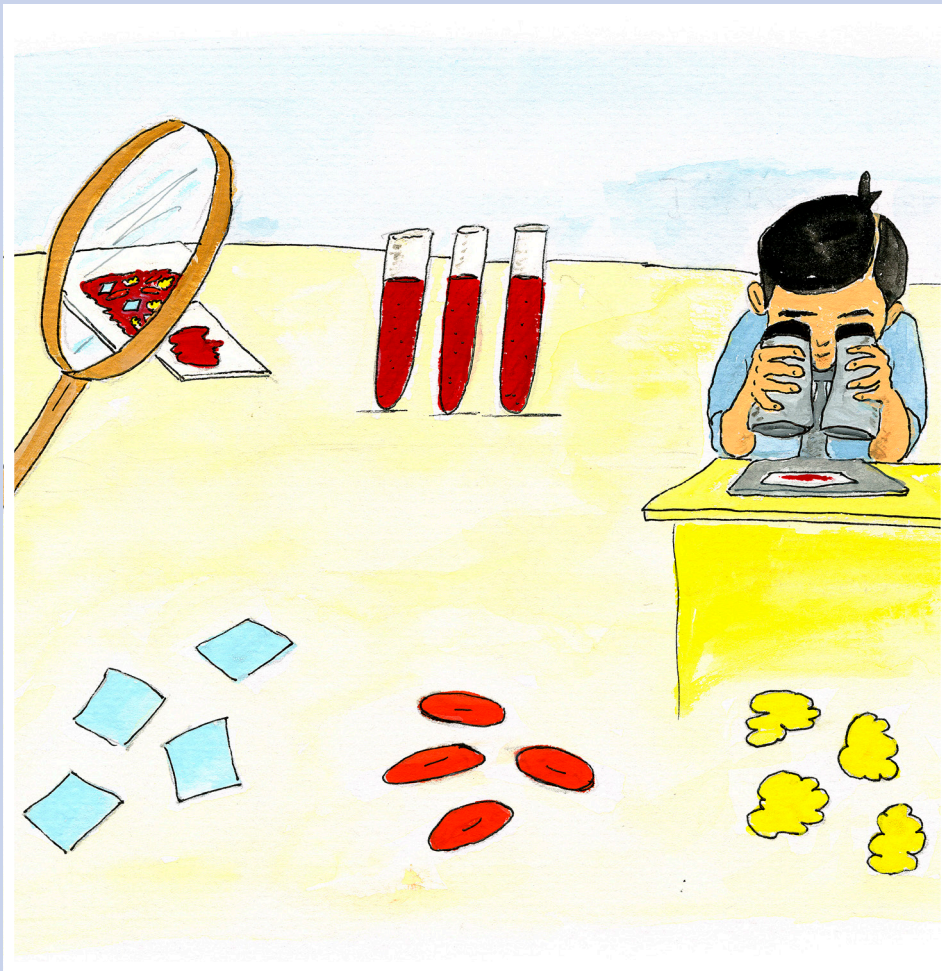


Staying strong

Having a transplant can be a long treatment.

If you have worries, talk to the nurses caring for you, they can get the church minister, interpreter, or ILO, to come see you.





When you are almost healed

You will have a blood test every day to see how you are healing.

When you have enough working blood cells, you leave hospital and go to the hostel nearby.

You will travel in from the hostel to the hospital a few times a week to see the transplant team and have a blood test.

When your blood is fully healed and strong you will return back home to country.

When you are back home

Back home you will need to have check-ups and blood tests with your doctor in the community.

You will also need to leave country to see your blood doctor back at the city hospital for check-ups.

Having the transplant will change your immune system.

You will have to start your vaccination needles again. These are the needles you had when you were a baby and child, which stop you getting sicknesses such as measles and mumps.

Your doctor in the community can give these to you.





When can I have children?

For two years after the transplant, it is best not to try and have children. The chemo you had, will cause the baby to get sick and not form well inside the mother.

When having sex, to stop getting pregnant you or your partner need to use a condom.

After two years and if you are ready to have children, you may have sperm or eggs saved at the fertility doctors, which you can use to have children with your partner.

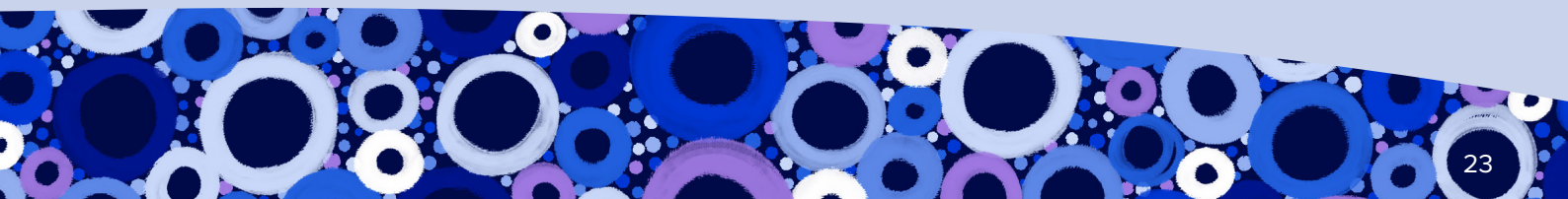
You can talk to your doctor about this.

End of Book Four

We hope this booklet has helped you and your family learn about young blood cell transplants (stem cell transplants).

Common questions

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Abbreviations and references

Autograft Transplant – your own young blood stem cells are collected and given to you after strong chemo.

Blood Nurse (Cancer Care Coordinator) – a member of the team who works with patients with blood changes and their families.

Dietician – a member of the team who specialises in the right food for you to keep you well and strong.

Feeling Crook – feeling nauseated, vomiting, or having an upset stomach pain.

Finishing Up – dying or passing away.

Germs – infection causing pathogens: bacteria; viruses; fungus.

Haematologist – specialist blood doctor.

Hickman Line/Tube – a central line inserted into the large vein in a patient's chest to enable fluids to be given and blood samples taken.

ILO/Indigenous Liaison Officers – are staff members who support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families.

Leukaemia – blood cancer of the white blood cells.

Lymph System – a network of tubes and glands in your body, which holds certain types of white cells. These tubes carry excess fluid from the blood and the white cells clean the fluid and fight infection.

Lymphoma – cancer of a white cell usually found in the lymph system.

Myeloma – a cancer of plasma cells which is a type of white blood cell.

OT/Occupational Therapist – who help with equipment for home and hospital.

Pharmacist – a member of the team who specialises in medicines and drugs.

PICC Line/Tube – (a peripherally inserted central catheter) or special tubes inserted into the upper arm. Fluids and medicines can go into these tubes and blood samples can be taken from them without using needles.

Stem Cell Transplant – also known as a young blood cell transplant.

Sorry Business – a funeral or a time for grieving and remembering people who have died.

Special Business – are times of significance to strengthen peoples connection to the physical and spirit world.

Special Blood Machine/Apheresis Machine – a blood cell separator, used to collect stem or young cells, before a transplant.

Transplant – means to move something from one place to another place.

Vaccinations – activate and protect the immune system to fight against certain diseases.

Young Blood Cell Transplant – young blood cells or stem cells are collected and given to a patient after strong chemo.

References:

Cancer Institute of NSW (2020) Retrieved from www.eviq.org.au

Leukaemia Foundation (2020) Retrieved from www.leukaemia.org.au

Need to talk?

Contact us on 1800 620 420
leukaemia.org.au

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Helpful phone numbers and contacts

You might like to write down some of the contact details for the people you're talking with and make some notes about important stuff.

Emergency Ambulance: 000

Blood nurse (cancer care coordinator): _____

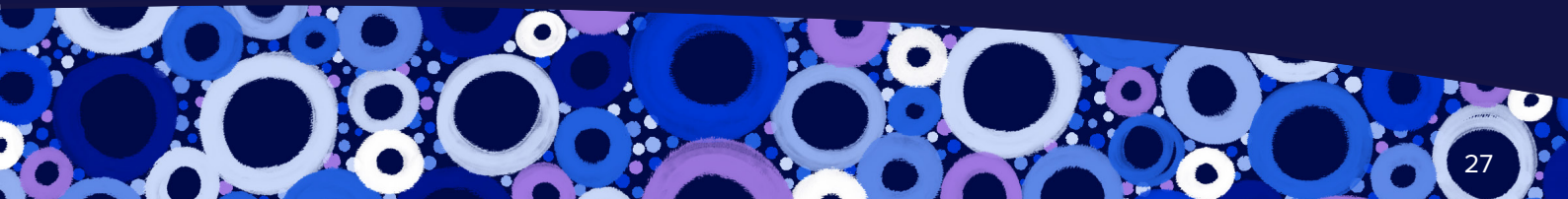
Cancer Council: _____

Health Worker: _____

ILO: _____

Cancer Day Unit: _____

Hospital number: _____





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