

STEM CELLS FOR LIFE

Backgrounder

- Blood stem cell transplants Save Lives!
- These transplants can treat people of all ages who are dealing with more than 80 diseases and disorders (see attached list);
- Siblings can be a match; however, most stem cell transplants are achieved using matched unrelated donors;
- It takes many thousands of people to register as a potential donor to help find a match;
- Registration is easy: attend a *Swab In* event or register online at blood.ca/rotary ;
- Registration criteria is focused on persons who are 17-35 y/o who required completing a brief medical questionnaire;
- Members of the LGBTQIA+ community CAN join the registry and donate. You won't be asked about your sexual orientation when registering because it doesn't factor into choosing the best possible match for a patient;
- Ethnicity is a key to finding a match; so, it's really important to have representation on the registry that mirrors Canada's diversity; international students are most welcome to register;
- Thankfully, blood stem cell registries in countries around the globe are linked in order to provide the best chance to match a donor with a recipient;
- Finding a match is like finding a needle in a haystack; while successful transplants can be achieved less than a perfect match, depending on your ethnic background, "the chance of finding an exact match with an unrelated donor is about one in 100,000";
- If you are a match, you will most likely donate from peripheral blood (like a regular blood or plasma donation) using a process called apheresis whereby your stem cells are taken from your blood and the remaining blood is returned to you directly; or, in less than 10% of situations, the blood stem cells are taken from the bone marrow in your pelvic bone under general anesthetic;



In partnership with:



STEM CELLS FOR LIFE

- More registered donors mean a better chance of a match ... there are always patients waiting for a match and the opportunity for a healthy life!

Diseases and conditions treated by a blood stem cell transplant

- Stem cell transplants can treat over 80 diseases and disorders, including:
- Various types of blood cancers such as leukemia, lymphoma or myeloma.
- Bone marrow deficiency diseases such as thalassemia or sickle cell disease.
- Aplastic anemia (the lack of normal blood cell production).
- Inherited immune system and metabolic disorders.
- **Our bodies constantly manufacture stem cells because without them, the consequences can be life-threatening.**

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