

Information sheet for Stem Cell Donation

New registration procedure: only with a simple cheek swab

Why become a stem cell donor?

For patients with certain blood diseases, e.g. leukaemia, a transplantation of blood stem cells from a healthy donor is often their only hope. The diseased cells are first destroyed by chemotherapy and then replaced by the donor's healthy stem cells. The blood stem cells are located in the bone marrow and there are two techniques of donation: firstly, by bone marrow aspiration and secondly, through stimulation of the bone marrow with a hormone-like substance (G-CSF) so that the stem cells enter the blood stream and can be harvested from the peripheral blood (apheresis). For a successful stem cell transplantation the tissue type of donor and patient must be similar. As this is rarely the case, a worldwide registry exists to aid the search for matching healthy donors.

Donors should not be older than 55 and should fulfill the same criteria as a normal healthy blood donor.

How do I become a donor?

Step 1: Registration in one of our donation centres and **determination of your tissue type** with a simple cheek swab. This is also possible during a normal blood donation! Your tissue typing details will be entered on the Swiss Blood Stem Cell and the worldwide registries.

Step 2: If your tissue type matches a patient's tissue type, you will be invited to return for further blood tests to confirm your tissue type and screen your blood for the presence of infections like hepatitis or the AIDS virus. Based on these results, it will be decided if you come into consideration as a stem cell donor and become a potential life-saver.

Step 3: After a **thorough and extensive explanation** by a physician about the possible risks and adverse reactions of the stem cell collection procedures, you will be able to make the **informed decision** if you are willing to become available for the patient. If yes, you will be asked to sign an **informed consent** and this will be followed by a **thorough medical check-up**.

Step 4: One week before the stem cell transplantation the patient is given chemotherapy, which aims to destroy the diseased cells. After this point, the patient cannot survive without a following transfer of healthy stem cells.

How high is the possibility, that I will become a stem cell donor?

Experience shows that in 10 years less than 5% of potential registered stem cell donors will be found to match a patient's tissue type. The probability that your tissue type will match a patient's and for you to become a donor in the first year is 1%.

For more detailed information and further questions you can also contact the Head Medical Department of Blutspende Zürich (info@zhbsd.ch or phone: 058 272 52 52) or use the link on our homepage www.blutspendezurich.ch.

We thank you very much for your attention!

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