

Half-matched transplant is cost-effective for blood cancers

Blood or marrow transplant helps people with lymphoma, leukemia



A newer type of blood or marrow transplant (BMT) is cost-effective and should be covered by insurance in the US. That's a recommendation from researchers, after a new study.

BMT can cure people with lymphoma, leukemia and other blood cancers. In the past, only fully matched donors were used. But many people don't have a fully matched donor.

A clinical trial compared two other types of donors:

- half-matched donors, usually a parent or child
- cord blood, from umbilical cords that are not needed after an unrelated baby is born

Researchers showed that both half-matched and cord blood BMT helped people survive equally well for 5 years.

The study included about 370 people in the US, aged 18-70. They got BMT during 2012-2018. The people either had lymphoma that was controlled by medicine or had acute leukemia in remission (no sign of disease). The people also answered questions about their quality of life.

Recently, researchers used information from the study to look at the economics for patients who had BMT with either donor type. Researchers did complex math to project survival beyond the trial and estimate future payments to Medicare and private health insurance.

- For US patients who had Medicare, half-matched BMT was less expensive than cord blood BMT in the long run.
- For US patients who were younger than age 65 and privately insured, half-matched BMT was more expensive, but still a reasonable value when compared with other treatments for blood cancers.

Because BMT can cost more than \$400,000, it's important for health insurance to cover it. Without insurance coverage, many people cannot afford cancer treatments. Insurers review these types of scientific studies to help them make coverage policies. Many cover half-matched BMT.

Keep in mind

In the US, cord blood is stored by private businesses and can be costly. Cord blood may cost less in some other countries.

BMT is just one of many treatments for cancer. Ask your doctor about possible benefits and harms of different options.

Learn more about

- [Financial help for patients](#) at BeTheMatch.org
- [Clinical trials of half-matched BMT](#) at CTsearchsupport.org
- More [study summaries](#) at CIBMTR.org

Source

Ramsey SD, Bansal A, Li L, et al. [Cost-Effectiveness of Unrelated Umbilical Cord Blood Transplantation versus HLA-Haploidentical Related Bone Marrow Transplantation: Evidence from BMT CTN 1101](#). Transplantation and Cellular Therapy. 2023. Epub 2023/04/30. doi:10.1016/j.jtct.2023.04.017.

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BMT CTN is a collaboration of The Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research (CIBMTR); The Medical College of Wisconsin; The National Marrow Donor Program /Be The Match; and The Emmes Company.

Learn more at [BMTCTN.net](https://www.bmtctn.net)

This plain-language summary was written by Jennifer Motl at the Medical College of Wisconsin and reviewed by an author of the full article. © 2023 by CIBMTR, license [CC BY-SA 4.0](#).