

Guidelines on cancer screening for transplant recipients

What did researchers want to share?

Researchers wanted to share the best guidelines for cancer screening specifically for transplant recipients.

If a patient has a transplant to treat cancer and that cancer comes back, it's called 'relapse'. But some transplant recipients get a new cancer that's different from the first cancer. Transplant recipients are more likely to get a new cancer than people who have not had a transplant. This is due to the intense treatment patients get before, during, and after their transplant.

Screening is a way for doctors to help patients find a new cancer early, so it can be treated more easily.

In this study, researchers wanted to find out which types of new cancers transplant recipients get most often. Then they agreed on the best cancer screening for transplant recipients to find a new cancer early. The researchers did not include screening guidelines for new blood cancers, like leukemia or lymphoma.

The guidelines were developed by two major organizations of transplant doctors:

- CIBMTR[®] (Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research[®])
- EBMT (European Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation)

What did they find?

Researchers found that the most common places for transplant recipients to get new cancers are in and around the mouth, the skin, the breasts, and in the thyroid gland. They also found that some transplant recipients had especially high risks of getting a new cancer after transplant. These were patients who:

- Were treated before transplant with high doses of radiation that covered the whole body
- Were at a young age at the time of transplant
- Had chronic graft-versus-host disease (GVHD)
- Had their GVHD treated with steroids for 2 years or longer

The researchers pointed out that both allogeneic and autologous transplant recipients have higher risks for getting new cancers than the general population. (Allogeneic transplants use donated cells from another person, either related or unrelated to the patient. Autologous transplants use a patient's own cells.)

Important Points:

- **Common places for new cancers after transplant are the mouth, skin, breast, and thyroid.**
- **Both allogeneic and autologous transplant recipients have a higher chance of getting a new cancer.**

Why is this important?

Because transplant recipients are at higher risk of getting a new cancer, the researchers shared screening guidelines for doctors to use with their patients. Doctors now have clear instructions on the special cancer screening transplant recipients need.

What else should I keep in mind about this study?

The researchers reported on cancer screening for transplant recipients. But there aren't specific screening tests for all types of cancer. And for some cancers, experts don't recommend screening. That's why it's always important to tell your doctor if you notice any new or unusual symptoms.

Questions to ask your doctor

If you are considering transplant or have had a transplant, here are some of the questions you may want to ask your doctor:

- Are there any types of cancers that I have a high risk of getting?
- What screening tests do you recommend, and how often should I get them?
- What early signs of cancer should I be looking for?
- What steps can I take to lower my chances of getting cancer?

Learn more about

- [This research study](#)
- [After-transplant care guidelines](#)

Source

Inamoto Y, Shah NN, Savani BN, et al. Secondary solid cancer screening following hematopoietic cell transplantation. Bone Marrow Transplantation. Epub 2015 Mar 30.

About this research summary

Ground-breaking research into blood and marrow transplant is happening every day. That research is having a significant impact on the survival and quality of life of thousands of transplant patients. But the research is written by scientists for scientists. By providing research news in an easy-to-understand way, patients, caregivers, and families have access to useful information that can help them make treatment decisions.

This information is provided on behalf of the Consumer Advocacy Committee of the CIBMTR[®] (Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research[®]). The CIBMTR is a research collaboration between the National Marrow Donor Program[®]/Be The Match[®] and the Medical College of Wisconsin.