

After donating blood-forming cells, older people report similar quality of life as younger people

What were researchers trying to learn?

Researchers wanted to learn how well older people (60 or older) do after they donate blood-forming cells. They wanted to learn whether older donors have more problems than younger donors.

More people 60 or older get transplanted now, often receiving blood-forming cells donated from their sibling (brother or sister). Since siblings are usually a similar age, there are more older donors. Doctors want to make sure it's safe for older people to donate.

Researchers studied 60 donors 18-60 years old and 104 donors older than 60. They asked them questions about their health-related quality of life (how they felt physically and mentally) 3 times:

- Before donation
- 4 weeks after donation
- 1 year after donation

What did they find?

Before donation, older donors were less healthy physically but healthier mentally than younger donors.

After donation (at 4 weeks and 1 year), older donors and younger donors had similar physical and mental health. About the same number said they felt physically back to normal. And it took both groups about the same amount of time to feel completely well.

Important Points:

- **Siblings 60 and older can donate blood-forming cells.**
- **Older donors have similar quality of life after donation as younger donors.**

Why is this important?

Transplant doctors can continue to recommend that healthy siblings in their 60s donate blood-forming cells. This helps more older people get a transplant.

What else should I keep in mind about this study?

The results of research studies are always limited in what they can and can't tell you. In this study, the older donors were probably healthier than an average person their age because their doctors thought they were fit enough to give the donation. This can make it hard to know what the results mean for you.

Questions to ask your doctor

If you're older than 60 and considering donating blood-forming cells for your sibling, you may want to ask:

- How long do people my age usually take to recover after donation?
- Is there anything about my health that affects my ability to donate?
- What are common side effects after donation?

Learn more about

- [This research study](#)
- [Donating blood-forming cells](#)

Source

Switzer GE, Bruce J, Kiefer DM, et al. Health-related quality of life among older related hematopoietic stem cell donors (>60 years) is equivalent to that of younger related donors (18-60 years): A related donor safety study. *Biology of Blood and Marrow Transplantation*. 2017 Jan 1; 23(1):165-171. Epub 2016 Oct 14. PMC5182103.

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.