

Donating blood-forming cells twice is safe for donors

People who donate blood-forming cells twice feel similar both times. That's according to surveys of 720 people who donated twice between 2004 and 2013 through the National Marrow Donor Program[®] (NMDP). After studying these people, doctors said that donating twice is safe and doesn't increase risks. If you decide to donate twice, you can tell your doctor how you felt during your first donation. That way, your doctor can help you feel well during the second donation.

Multiple donations are rare

NMDP coordinates the Be The Match Registry[®], which includes more than 13.5 million potential adult donors. Each year, the program matches donors with about 6,100 people who need transplants. Most people donate one time. Only 3% (3 out of 100 donors) donated more than once.

You can donate two ways

There are 2 ways for an adult to donate:

1. Peripheral blood stem cells (PBSC)
2. Bone marrow

Donating PBSC is more common. Donors get shots of a medicine that increases the number of blood-forming cells in the bloodstream. After 5 days, blood is removed from a needle in one arm and passed through a machine that takes out the blood-forming cells and returns the rest of the blood. PBSC donors may have headaches, joint or muscle aches, and fatigue, but are typically back to normal 2 days later.

To donate bone marrow, donors get anesthesia to prevent pain. Doctors use a needle to take liquid bone marrow from the back of the pelvic bone. Donors usually go home the same day. They may feel soreness in their lower back for 1 or 2 weeks.

Donors recover quickly

Either way of donating blood-forming cells is safe. Because no more than 5% of your marrow is taken, your immune system stays strong. In fact, your body will replace those cells in 4 to 6 weeks.

Questions to ask your doctor

If you're considering donating a second time, you may want to ask:

- Knowing how I felt during my first donation, how will you keep me comfortable this time?

Learn more about

- [This research study](#)
- [Blood and marrow transplant](#)
- [Donor health and safety](#)

Source

Stroncek DF, Shaw BE, Logan BR, et al. Donor experiences of second marrow or peripheral blood stem cell collection mirror the first, but CD34+ yields are less. *Biology of Blood and Marrow Transplantation: Journal of the American Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation*. 2018 Jan; 24(1):175-184. doi:10.1016/j.bbmt.2017.09.013. Epub 2017 Sep 25.

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.