Finding blood and marrow transplant donors for everyone

Haploidentical donors slightly better than cord blood in some cases

Although blood and marrow transplant (BMT) can cure leukemia and lymphoma, some people can’t find a fully matched donor. And people with diverse ethnic backgrounds may have more difficulty finding a match.

New research shows that two types of partly matched donors can help: haploidentical and cord blood donors. “Few, if any, patients should be denied transplant for lack of a donor,” researchers wrote.

This news is from a clinical trial that included about 370 US adults with acute leukemia, Hodgkin lymphoma, or non-Hodgkin lymphoma. People got BMT during 2012-2018 from either a haploidentical donor or a cord blood donor. They all had similar preparation, called reduced-intensity conditioning.

What is a haploidentical transplant?

Although it is a mouthful, haploidentical (pronounced HAP-lo-eye-DEN-tick-al) simply means half-matched for certain genes. A haploidentical, or half-matched, donor can be your mom, your dad or your child. Your brothers or sisters have a 50% chance of being a half-match.

What is a cord blood transplant?

Umbilical cord blood, which is often thrown away after birth, instead can be frozen and used for life-saving transplants. Cord blood does not have to be
matched as closely as bone marrow. So, it is a good option for people who can’t find a full or half-match.

**Haploidentical transplants may be a little better than cord blood**

In this study, researchers found most people lived longer after a haploidentical transplant than after a cord blood transplant. About 2 years later:

- 57% of people with haploidentical transplants were alive
- 46% of people with cord blood transplants were alive

**Learn more about**

- [HLA matching](https://bethematch.org) at BeTheMatch.org
- More [study summaries](https://cibmtr.org) at CIBMTR.org

**Source**


**Clinical Trial ID**

ClinicalTrials.gov [NCT01597778](https://clinicaltrials.gov); BMT CTN 1101

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**About this research summary**

The Blood and Marrow Transplant Clinical Trials Network (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://bmtctn.net)