

## Changes keep BMT safe and available during pandemic

### Be The Match Registry® overcomes COVID-19 challenges



Be The Match® helps people with lymphoma, leukemia, sickle cell disease and other diseases find volunteer donors for blood or marrow transplants (BMT). They also help collect cells from these donors and get them to the patient in time for their BMT.



Despite obstacles, they still helped people get BMT during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Lockdowns and travel delays made it harder for donors to reach special centers that collect blood and bone marrow. Be The Match changed their process so that donors had fewer appointments for lab tests.

To make sure cells arrived on time for patients, Be The Match called for most donations to be done *before* patients needed them. In another change, most donated cells were frozen. Frozen cells keep longer than refrigerated cells.

Next, couriers transported each donation, sometimes thousands of miles. Despite fewer flights available, extra travel planning helped couriers transport precious blood and marrow cells on time. Even when professional couriers were not available, volunteer couriers were able to travel as quickly as before the pandemic.

Also, the pandemic made it harder for donors to be available. In response, transplant centers began looking for not just one matched donor, but multiple back-up donors. Be The Match was able to handle the extra searches for suitable donors, just as quickly as before the pandemic.

## What's next

Be The Match is checking to see if the health of patients and donors was affected by the pandemic.

## Learn more about

- [COVID-19 FAQs at BeTheMatch.org](#)
- [More study summaries at CIBMTR.org](#)

## Source

Auletta, JJ; Novakovich, JL; Stritesky, GL. [Meeting the demand for unrelated donors in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic: Rapid adaptations by The National Marrow Donor Program and its network partners ensured a safe supply of donor products.](#) Transplantation and Cellular Therapy. In press. PMID not available.  
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## About this research summary

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

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