

## New tool helps doctors decide when to stop medicines

After BMT, many people need immune suppression for more than 5 years

A new online calculator helps doctors decide when it's safest to stop immune suppression medicines after blood or marrow transplant (BMT). This is important because, while these medicines protect against graft-versus-host disease (GVHD), they also increase the risk of infections.

BMT may cure leukemia and other blood cancers. It replaces unhealthy immune cells with healthy cells donated by another person. However, the donated cells may attack organs like skin, digestive tract, or lungs. This is called GVHD. It can be severe and can affect quality of life.

Researchers at BMT CTN studied the records of 827 people who got BMT. After 5 years, about 20% of people (2 in 10 people) stopped taking immune suppression medicines without getting GVHD. These people were **more** likely to have:

- received bone marrow, rather than peripheral blood.
- taken immune suppression medicines longer before they stopped.

Contrary to past beliefs, staying on the medicines was **not** linked to cancer coming back.

Researchers developed an online tool for doctors, [Landmark Prediction of Immune Suppression Discontinuation](#). The tool predicts a person's chance of safely stopping medicines at that time.

### Ask your doctor

- What medicines are right for me?
- How long should I expect to take my immune suppression medicines after BMT?

### Source

Pidala J, Martens M, Anasetti C, et al. Factors Associated With Successful Discontinuation of Immune Suppression After Allogeneic Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation. *JAMA Oncology*. 2019. Epub 2019 Sept 26. doi: 10.1001/jamaoncol.2019.2974. PMID: PMC6763979.



### Learn more about

- [This research](#)
- [Managing your medicines](#), from BeTheMatch.org
- More [study summaries](#) at cibmtr.org

### About this research summary

The Blood and Marrow Transplant Clinical Trials Network (BMT CTN) conducts research that helps thousands of people live longer and feel better.



### BMT CTN Data Coordinating Center

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