Blood and marrow transplant can cure sickle cell disease

Most people who live for 2 years or longer after their blood or marrow transplant (BMT) are cured of their disease and can expect to live for many more years.

That’s according to new research on BMT and sickle cell disease.

Although BMT can cure sickle cell disease, it also may have serious complications.

Researchers said that for people with sickle cell disease who have lived for at least 2 years after BMT:

- Long-term survival is excellent for those who lived for at least 2 years after their BMT.
- If you have had a stroke or have to be admitted to the hospital often to manage your disease, then it is better to have a BMT sooner than later.
- Your best donor is a tissue-matched brother or sister. Other donors also extend your life, but you may have more complications from BMT,

That’s according to a study of 950 people who got BMT in the US during 2000 to 2017 and lived for 2 years or longer after their BMT. Researchers observed people for an average of 7 years after BMT.

Researchers say that **BMT is a good treatment for sickle cell disease if you have had a stroke or need to be admitted to the hospital from complications such as pain or chest crisis.**

It’s also important for people to keep getting yearly checkups, even years after BMT.

**Keep in mind**

There are several types of sickle cell disease. This study included only 2 types: hemoglobin SS disease and hemoglobin S beta thalassemia.

There are other treatments for sickle cell disease. Ask your doctor about your options and possible benefits and harms.

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**Source**


**About this research summary**

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