

Transplant centers should help patients find care after BMT

Requiring a 24-hour caregiver blocks some patients from getting BMT

There is not much data about what happens to patients who don't have a caregiver after transplant. But most doctors won't provide blood or marrow transplant (BMT) to patients who don't have a caregiver. Experts say that should change.

BMT can cure leukemia, sickle cell disease, and other blood disorders. But, BMT can have serious effects, especially in the first few months. Patients must stay home and avoid big groups of people. That's because patients easily catch infections in the first few months after BMT.

Because of this, many hospitals require that patients have a 24-hour caregiver for the first 3-6 months after BMT.

A caregiver is often a patient's spouse or relative. However, some people don't have a healthy spouse or relative who can care for them for 3-6 months. They may need to rely on friends or others.

Also, many caregivers can't afford to take 3-6 months away from work, even with the US Family and Medical Leave Act, which provides limited, unpaid support for family members.

Most insurance plans don't pay for 24-hour caregivers. Currently, if a patient cannot find someone to help them, they may not be able to get BMT.

Some experts say it may be useful to shift care. Instead of having a 24-hour caregiver, patients might use other services:

- Part-time caregivers or home health aides can give medicines, clean the house, and call for help if a patient falls
- Fitness tracking bracelets can report patients' temperature and vital signs to their doctor
- Online counseling services can provide emotional support
- Online video visits with doctors and nurses can answer patients' minor questions
- Ride services can transport patients to medical visits
- Community services can deliver meals

Unfortunately, health insurance does not cover some of these services. Researchers and advocates are working to support patients and caregivers.

Get help after transplant

Transplant centers have social workers who can help patients and caregivers find local resources. Ask your doctor to connect you.



Free resources for caregivers

- [Caregiver resources](#) at NMDP.org
- [NMDP Patient Support Center](#), call/text 1(888)999-6743
- More [study summaries](#) at CIBMTR.org

Source

Tweeten B, Randall J, Barata A, et al. [The Caregiver Paradigm in Hematopoietic Cell Transplant: Current and Future Directions](#). Transplantation and Cellular Therapy. [Epub ahead of print.] Epub 2025 June 6. PMID: 40544999. doi:10.1016/j.jtct.2025.06.022.

About this research summary

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