

MYTH All bone marrow donations involve surgery.

FACT There are two ways to donate; bone marrow or peripheral blood stem cells. The majority of the time, donors are asked to donate peripheral blood stem cells, which do not require anesthesia or surgery. Instead, it is more similar to donating platelets where the doctors collect stem cells from a donor's blood stream.

MYTH Bone marrow donation is painful.

FACT During the bone marrow donation donors are under general or regional anesthesia, so donors feel no pain during the donation process. Afterwards donors can expect to feel uncomfortable and have some pain in their lower back. Discomfort and side effects vary from person to person. Donors report some pain, fatigue and stiffness. Some donors describe the pain as similar to achy hip bones, falling on their buttocks or more like a strained muscle in the back. Marrow donors can expect to be back at work, school, and other activities within one to seven days. On average, all symptoms will disappear within 21 days.

Peripheral blood stem cell donors take injections of a medication called filgrastim for five days before the donation to increase the number of cells to be collected. Donors may experience flu-like symptoms including headaches, bone or muscle pain, nausea, fatigue, or difficulty with sleeping during this time. These symptoms are expected to go away within 48 hours of donating.

MYTH Bone marrow stem cells are taken from the spinal cord?

FACT In a bone marrow donation, stem cells are collected from the back of the pelvic bone (not the spinal cord) using a needle while the donor is under anesthesia. In a peripheral blood stem cell donation, the cells are collected directly from the bloodstream.

MYTH Donating bone marrow is dangerous and weakens the donor.

FACT Although the side effects vary from person to person, the body naturally replenishes the stem cells within several weeks.

MYTH Donors have to pay for the donation procedure.

FACT There is no cost to the donor to donate. When a donor is matched with a patient, the patient's insurance, the national Be The Match Registry or **DKMS** will pay the costs (including any travel, meals, lodging expenses that may be necessary). **DKMS** also registers all donors on a contribution basis. It costs **DKMS** \$65 to register and tissue type each donor, so contributions to help to cover the cost are greatly appreciated, but not required.