



# Autologous stem cell transplantation: Understanding your journey

Information for transplant-eligible patients  
with multiple myeloma

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## **MARTIN FREEMAN** *Universal*

An active artist and California native, Martin Freeman was kind enough to donate his extraordinary artwork to Janssen. Martin was diagnosed with AIDS in 1990.

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Janssen Oncology has produced this text with the greatest care in July 2023.

# Introduction

This booklet is intended to provide you with information about the treatment journey with autologous stem cell transplantation (ASCT). You may have decided to read this booklet to learn more about ASCT and how it works, or your doctor may have recommended this booklet to you because they are considering ASCT as a treatment option for you.

'Autologous' is defined as 'taken from the same person'

## Why have an ASCT?

An ASCT is a type of treatment for patients with blood cancers, such as multiple myeloma and leukaemia.<sup>1</sup>

Undergoing an ASCT can provide many benefits in treating your condition, but can also come with risks.<sup>1,2</sup>

See page 4 for more information on the risks of ASCT.

## What does an ASCT involve?

An ASCT is made up of three steps:<sup>1</sup>

- Collecting blood cell-making stem cells from your blood or bone marrow
- Administering high-dose chemotherapy to destroy the myeloma cells in your body
- Returning the stem cells to your blood where they travel to the bone marrow, encouraging the growth of new blood cells

## What to expect?

Including receiving anti-myeloma therapy beforehand, your ASCT journey can take up to 32 weeks.<sup>1,2\*</sup>

After your transplant, your recovery time could range from three months up to one year.

Due to the nature of the treatment, it is common to experience some side effects, please contact your doctor if these get severe. You can also seek out psychological help if you feel you need it.

At some points during your treatment, you may need to stay in the hospital for an extended period of time. This time will vary for each person.

\*Refer to timeline for detailed overview

# Are there any risks?

The main risks that come from an ASCT are the side effects related to the anti-myeloma treatment and high-dose chemotherapy/radiotherapy.<sup>1,2</sup>

There is a long recovery time after receiving an ASCT, which can disrupt your life for up to a year.<sup>1</sup>

You may need to spend longer in hospital if there are any complications during your ASCT.<sup>1</sup>

Response to an ASCT will differ from patient to patient, and the desired results cannot always be guaranteed.<sup>2</sup>

Before you decide to go ahead with an ASCT, your doctor will discuss the benefits and risks with you in greater detail, so you can make a fully informed decision.

## Patient testimonials

***"This is where the testimonial can go, short and simple to fill the space"***

- Joe Bloggs

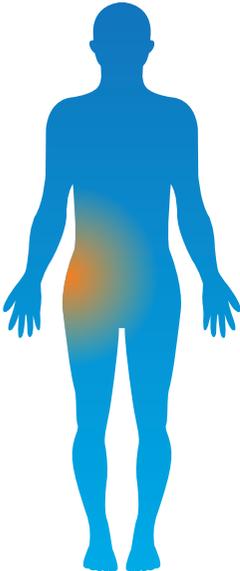
***"This is where the testimonial can go, short and simple to fill the space"***

- Jane Bloggs

# Starting your journey

## Before your transplant

To ensure your ASCT goes smoothly, you will need several tests before, during and after your treatment. Many of these tests may be familiar to you.<sup>1</sup>



**The main test you'll require is a bone marrow aspiration and biopsy.**

This is where a sample of your bone marrow is taken from near the hip bone. The biopsy results from this can be used after your transplant to check whether the treatment is working.<sup>1</sup>

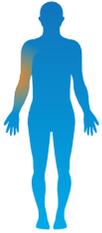


See page 11 for a glossary of these icons.

# Your treatment timeline

This timeline will guide you through what treatments you will have, when you will have them, and what you're likely to experience.

See page 11 for a glossary of the icons you'll see on this timeline.



## UP TO 24 WEEKS

You will be given up to 24 weeks of anti-myeloma treatment to minimise the number of myeloma cells in your bone marrow.<sup>2</sup>

## 1 WEEK

You will be given medication each day. This will increase the production and movement of stem cells from your bone marrow to your bloodstream.<sup>1,2</sup>

## 1 WEEK

Your stem cells will be collected through a blood or bone marrow sample. If your cells are taken from your bone marrow, they will be taken near your hip, and you may be put under general anaesthetic.<sup>1</sup>

WEEK

0

24

25

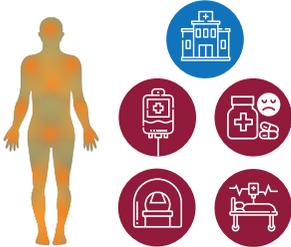
26

6

This wave shows the approximate change in your discomfort level during the different stages of your treatment. However, this will vary for every patient.

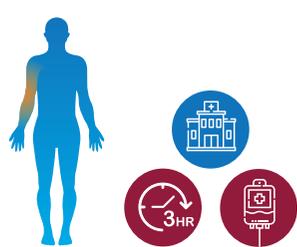
# During your transplant

 Your stem cells will be kept frozen in storage until they are needed to be transplanted back into your body.<sup>1,2</sup>



**UP TO 6 WEEKS**

You will receive a high dose of chemotherapy to destroy the myeloma cells in your body. This could be with a combination of two or more chemotherapies or radiation therapy. A common side effect from this treatment is fatigue.<sup>2</sup>



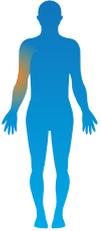
**UP TO 6 WEEKS**

Your stem cells will be put back into your body the same way you would receive a blood transplant. This can take several hours. Often there are no side effects from the infusion. After your treatment you may need to spend up to 3 weeks in hospital.<sup>1,2</sup>

# After your transplant



You will need to recover with supportive care and regular follow-up appointments. These will involve several regular tests to see how you're responding.



You will be particularly susceptible to infections, so you need to be mindful of good hygiene and avoid people who are unwell. For more information, refer to the 'Stay healthy, stay informed' booklet.



## ABOUT 3 MONTHS

You will receive a bone marrow biopsy to check for myeloma cells. You may also need other scans to check for any changes in the bone.<sup>2</sup>

## CONSOLIDATION & MAINTENANCE

You may receive a course of anti-myeloma treatment to further reduce any remaining myeloma cells and extend the results of your treatment.<sup>2</sup>



### Top tip:

Use a calendar to help organise your follow-up visits



Scan this code with the camera on your smart device to access a digital version of this timeline.

QR CODE



You will need a caregiver to support you in your recovery (a member of your family or a close friend). They will need to accompany you to help identify any unexpected complications.<sup>1</sup>

Over time you will gradually feel stronger and more confident in going about your day-to-day activities.<sup>1</sup>

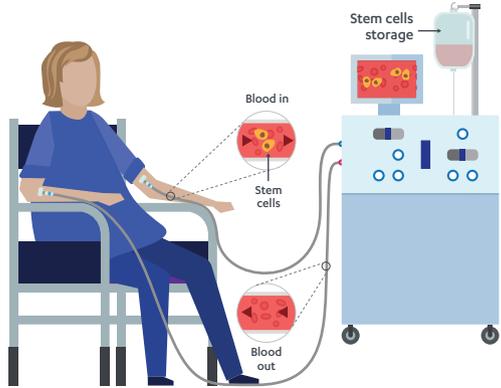


Carers can refer to the 'Guidance for carers' booklet. Your healthcare provider will also be able to teach your caregiver(s) how to support you during your recovery.<sup>1</sup>

# How your stem cells are transplanted

## 1. Collection

Your blood is taken through an intravenous (IV) in one of your arms, where the stem cells are separated out by a machine. Your blood is then returned through an IV in your other arm.<sup>1</sup>

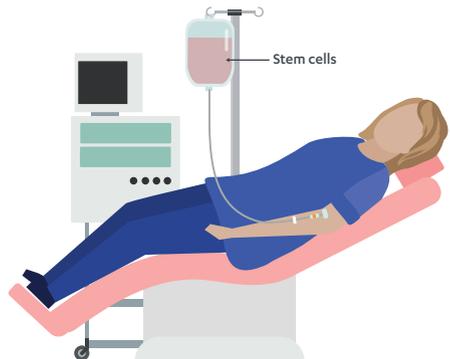


## 2. Chemotherapy

You are then given chemotherapy through an IV in your arm. This is to destroy the remaining myeloma cells.<sup>2</sup>

## 3. Transplant

Your stem cells are then transferred back in to your body through an IV in your arm. These will travel to the bone marrow and create new healthy blood cells.<sup>1</sup>



# Glossary of icons



## **Carer**

You will need the help of a carer during this time frame



## **Doctor**

This treatment can be performed by your doctor



## **Home**

This treatment can be performed at home



## **Hospital**

This treatment can be performed at a hospital



## **Long stay**

This treatment may mean you have a long stay in hospital



## **Hours**

This is an estimate of how long this treatment will take



## **Injection**

This treatment will be given by an injection



## **Intravenous infusion**

This treatment will be given by an IV infusion



## **Anaesthetic**

This treatment may require local or general anaesthetic



## **Radiotherapy**

This treatment involves the use of radiotherapy



## **Side effects**

This treatment is likely to cause side effects



Eat a healthy diet



Bathe or shower daily



Wear clean clothes daily



Change towels and bedding daily



Use a soft toothbrush and mouthwash



Do gentle exercises regularly

# How could you benefit from an ASCT?

If you choose to have an ASCT, it may help you live longer and improve your quality of life.<sup>1,2</sup>



## Patient testimonials

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# With ASCT, you are not alone



There were over 48,000 total stem cell transplants across Europe in 2019.<sup>3</sup>

Over 43,000 individual patients had nearly 20,000 allogeneic stem cell transplants and over 28,000 ASCT procedures.<sup>3</sup>

Rest assured, the process of ASCT has been around for 30 years. Patients' survival continues to improve with advances in technology, procedures and supportive care.<sup>1,4</sup>

ASCT  
HAS BEEN  
AROUND FOR  
30  
YEARS







## References:

1. Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Blood and Marrow Stem Cell Transplantation Guide. 2019. Available at: [https://llscorp.stg.lls.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/PS95\\_Blood\\_and\\_Marrow\\_Guide\\_2019.pdf](https://llscorp.stg.lls.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/PS95_Blood_and_Marrow_Guide_2019.pdf). Last accessed: June 2023.
2. Myeloma UK. High-dose Therapy and Autologous Stem Cell Transplantation Treatments and Tests Infoguide. Available at: <https://www.myeloma.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Myeloma-UK-High-dose-therapy-and-autologous-stem-cell-transplantation-Infoguide.pdf>. Last accessed: June 2023.
3. Passweg JR, et al. *Bone Marrow Transplant*. 2021;56(7):1651–1664.
4. Al Hamed R, et al. *Blood Cancer J*. 2019;9(4):44.

This information is intended for patients with multiple myeloma and is intended to inform patients about the clinical characteristics and treatment of their condition. You are receiving this information through the doctor treating you.