

Bone Marrow Transplant: Daily hygiene, skin care, and mouth care

When a bone marrow transplant (BMT) patient comes home, they can easily get an infection. Daily cleansing, skin care, and mouth care will help lower your risk for infection.

Daily hygiene and skin care

Thorough skin care and daily cleansing will help lower your risk for infection. Be sure to:

- Shower daily using a mild non-medicated soap. Apply moisturizing lotion after you shower and at bedtime.
- Use an electric razor when shaving until your platelet count is greater than 50,000/ μL and your neutrophils are greater than 1000/ μL . This will help prevent bleeding issues and lower your risk for infection.
- Avoid using medicated or heavily perfumed products, lotions, and soaps that contain large amounts of alcohol or lanolin.
- Use make-up, after-shave, and perfume in small amounts. If you have a skin reaction, stop using the product and report the reaction to your transplant team.

Skin changes and sensitivity

Skin changes are common after transplant due to both chemotherapy and radiation. Common skin changes include dryness, flaking, and skin discoloration or darkening. Although skin changes are common, you should report any new changes to your transplant doctor.



Sun sensitivity and your medicines

Certain medicines, such as tacrolimus, cyclosporine, and some antibiotics, can make your skin more sensitive to sun exposure. This means you are more likely to get a sunburn if you don't cover up when enjoying the outdoors.

Avoiding sun damage

Always use sunscreen to protect against skin cancer and the risk of a GVDH (graft-versus-host disease) flare caused by sunburn.

Avoid bright sunlight, and wear long-sleeved shirts, pants, and a hat with a brim when you are out in the sun. Cover any exposed skin surfaces with a 30 SPF sunscreen. Reapply at least every 2 hours or according to the manufacturer directions.



Mouth care

Check your mouth, teeth and gums every day. Report any unusual findings to your transplant doctor at your next appointment.

Use a soft-bristle toothbrush and avoid flossing when your platelet count is below 50,000/ μL to prevent bleeding. If your neutrophil count is less than 1000/ μL , you should brush your teeth after each meal.

If your mouth is dry, you can use an over-the-counter artificial saliva product. You can also rinse frequently with a salt-water solution. (Mix $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt with 1 quart of warm water.)

Your dentist will check your teeth during routine visits. However, if you need any dental work, tell your dentist to check with the transplant clinic first. You may need to start taking an antibiotic before your dental work is done. Your transplant doctor will tell you when it's safe to resume all regular dental care.

Notes

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