

Bone Marrow Transplant: When the patient comes home

When a bone marrow transplant (BMT) patient comes home, they can easily get an infection. It's important to make sure the home is ready before they arrive.

Pets

Pets that were in the home before your transplant can remain. Cats and dogs are safe as long as they are not allowed on the bedding, do not have close face contact, and do not get near your central line. In addition, make sure you:

- Wash your hands after having any contact with a pet.
- Avoid all contact with animal feces (poop), including cleaning the cat litter box, fish aquariums, and bird cages.
- Report any animal bites or scratches to your doctor.

You and other members of the family need to:

- Keep birds from flying freely within your home.
- Control cats and dogs when you are walking around so you don't trip and fall over the animal.
- Keep all pet immunizations and booster shots up to date.
- Have your veterinarian check your pet's poop yearly for parasites.
- Have cats tested each year for feline leukemia and for toxoplasmosis.
- Treat for fleas.
- Have your pet screened for ticks every day during tick season (May to November) if the pet walks through wooded areas.
- Keep pets indoors or on your own property so they don't pick up diseases from other animals.

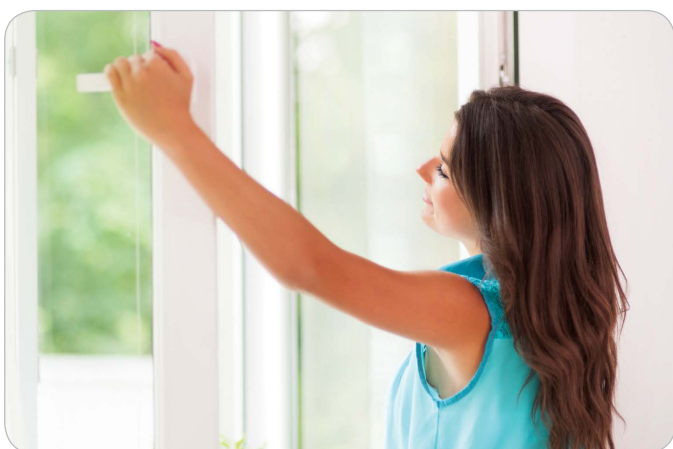


Plants

Plants can remain in the house, but you should avoid close contact with them. Remove plants from the room you sleep in.

Don't work directly with plants or soil (like pulling weeds, mowing the lawn, or raking leaves) for at least 6 months after the transplant and only after permission from your transplant doctor.

Watering plants is allowed, but wash your hands afterwards.



Housecleaning

Avoid vacuuming, dusting, and any other activities that expose you to dust while in treatment. Leave the room during these activities and stay away for at least 30 minutes afterwards to allow dust to resettle.

Laundry, bed linens, and towels

There is usually no risk of infection from doing laundry. You should:

- Change the bed linens at least once a week.
- Change towels every 2 days.
- Never share towels with anyone else.

Carpet cleaning

Carpets can be cleaned using a steam system as long as they will be completely dry before you get home. It is best to clean carpets using a chemical system and avoid using water. This helps prevent mold from forming underneath the carpet.

Bathrooms

Bathrooms should not have any visible mold or fungus. Have someone clean the bathrooms on a regular basis. Make sure bleach is used in the shower to prevent mold growth. Take care not to get any cleaning products on your skin or breathe in the fumes.

Air Quality

Basements

Avoid living in the basement if there is a possibility for increased exposure to dust and mold. If you must live in the basement, have every area in the basement inspected for any mold or dampness, and address any issues before you get home.

Open windows

It is best to keep the windows closed if:

- Your white blood cell count is low (neutrophil count less than 1000 / μ L)
- The wind is blowing dust up into the air.

Filtered air systems

Air conditioners, evaporative coolers, and heating systems need more attention when the immune system is weakened. Change all filters more often so that cleaner air is circulated in the home. Do this for the first year after your transplant (or longer if you are on immunosuppressive therapy). Check the manufacturer's recommendations for information on how often to change the filters. Be sure to have someone else change the filters. Doing it yourself can increase your risk of getting sick.

For swamp coolers, have the drip pads replaced and run the cooler for at least 30 minutes daily to avoid water stagnation. If a humidifier is used, make sure the water is changed daily.

Fans

It is acceptable to use fans during warm weather. If you are using a fan, have someone other than yourself dust the room and the fan blades at least 3 times per week.

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