

Preparing for Your Hospital Stay During Autologous Stem Cell Transplant

Most patients are in the hospital for 2 to 3 weeks while they have treatment with high-dose chemotherapy and autologous stem cell transplant (ASCT).

You may want to bring some items from home to help make your stay more comfortable. Here are some suggestions. If you have questions, be sure to call your nurse coordinator at 414-649-6540, or a member of the inpatient nursing staff at 414-646-6477.

All items brought to the hospital must be clean and dust-free. They do not need to be disinfected before they are taken into your room.

Clothing

Hospital gowns, pajamas, robes, and slipper socks are available for your use during your hospital stay. However, some patients prefer to bring their own clothes to wear, such as:

- Sweatpants or sweatshirts
- Sweaters
- Robes
- Pajamas/gowns
- Shorts
- Any comfortable clothes
- Scarves
- Slippers
- Walking shoes

All personal clothing must be washed at home and dried completely in the dryer to get rid of bacteria – no line drying please. Clothing should be brought from home to the hospital in a clean bag.

Make-up, ear or other body piercing

While your white blood cell count is low, no make-up, jewelry for piercing or contacts can be worn. When your absolute granulocyte count (AGC, a portion of your total white blood cell count) recovers to 500 for 3 days in a row, you may wear make-up, including foundation, blush and lipstick, and jewelry for piercing.

Eye make-up and contacts may not be worn until your AGC is 2000 for 2 weeks in a row. This usually occurs within the first three weeks of hospital discharge. All make-up products that you use must be new following your transplant. Fingernail polish and artificial nails are not permitted, as they can harbor bacteria and fungus.

Food and snacks

You may to keep snacks in your room, such as:

- Individually packaged cereals, pretzels, crackers, or chips
- Individually packaged servings of fruits, jello, pudding
- Granola bars, hard candy or gum

A dietitian will discuss diet recommendations with you. Family and friends may bring you food as long as they follow these recommendations. Any foods brought to you must be sealed and reheatable in the microwave. Perishable foods can be stored in the refrigerator for no more than 48 hours.

Please label your food items (name labels are available at the nurses station) before storing them in the 12th floor refrigerator. No fast food may be eaten during and for a few weeks after your autologous stem cell reinfusion. You may not eat any fresh or raw fruits and vegetables.

Other items to bring to make you more comfortable

You may want to bring in some personal items to make your hospital stay more comfortable. Please do not bring things that are irreplaceable. Each room has a TV, VCR, DVD, internet access via WiFi and dial up, exercise bike, small shelf and bulletin board. Videotapes are available in the unit video library. Most patients say they are able to concentrate for only short periods of time – think about this when choosing what to bring to the hospital.

Here are some items you may want to bring:

- Books, magazines
- Stationary supplies or writing journal
- Crossword and jigsaw puzzles
- Stamps
- Hobbies or crafts
- Playing cards
- Favorite comforter or blanket
- Cassette tapes of books or music
- Pillow (new; no feathers)
- Calendar
- Stuffed animals
- Pictures or photographs
- Posters
- Balloons (latex free)
- Silk arrangements

Items not to bring

Live plants, dried flowers, moss, tobacco products, and fresh fruits and vegetables may not be brought into the autologous stem cell transplant unit or your room. If an item is delivered (such as a flower arrangement in a natural wood container) it will remain at the nurses' station until family or friends can take it home. If family and friends are not sure what to bring, have them speak to one of the transplant nurses.

Other thoughts

Toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, and soap will be given to you by the hospital.

At-home personal care items such as soap, shampoo, deodorant, lotion, all make-up products and contact lens solution must be new upon discharge in order to decrease your exposure to bacteria.

Mail, packages and deliveries can be sent to you at the following address:

Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center
P.O. Box 2901
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201-2901
Attention: 12T
(your name)

The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem.