



# Cancer Support Group NEWSLETTER

[www.bccancerservice.org](http://www.bccancerservice.org)

*In honor of the committed service of Olove Colcord, R.N.*

## THE MISSION OF THE BERRIEN COUNTY CANCER SERVICE:

To provide free skilled home nursing services, equipment, information and supplies at cost for cancer patients and their families in Berrien County.

December 2010

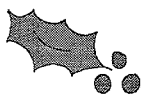
(269) 429-3281 or (269) 683-7460

VOLUME XIX ISSUE XII

The **BERRIEN COUNTY CANCER SUPPORT GROUP** is a group for patients, family members and care givers. Come share successes, feelings, fears and practical methods of coping with the physical and emotional aspects of living with the diagnosis of cancer.

.....

# Merry Christmas!!



# Seasons Greetings !!



# And



# Happy New Year!!



what matters.™

## What Is a Blood and Marrow Stem Cell Transplant?

A blood and marrow stem cell transplant replaces a person's abnormal stem cells with healthy ones from another person (a donor). This procedure allows the recipient to get new stem cells that work properly.

Stem cells are found in bone marrow, a sponge-like tissue inside the bones. Stem cells develop into the three types of blood cells that the body needs:

Red blood cells, which carry oxygen through the body

White blood cells, which fight infection

Platelets (PLATE-lets), which help the blood clot

Small numbers of stem cells also are found in the blood and in the umbilical cord (the cord that connects a fetus to its mother's placenta).

Another type of stem cell, called an embryonic (em-bre-ON-ik) stem cell, can develop into any type of cell in the body. These cells aren't found in bone marrow.

### Overview

Doctors use stem cell transplants to treat people who have:

- Certain cancers, such as leukemia (lu-KE-me-ah). The high doses of chemotherapy and radiation used to treat some cancers can severely damage or destroy bone marrow. A transplant replaces the stem cells that the treatment destroyed.
- Severe blood diseases, such as thalassemias (thal-a-SE-me-ahs), aplastic anemia (uh-NEE-me-uh), and sickle cell anemia. In these diseases, the body doesn't make enough red blood cells or they don't work properly.
- Certain immune-deficiency diseases that prevent the body from making some kinds of white blood cells. Without these cells, a person can develop life-threatening infections. A transplant provides stem cells to replace the missing white blood cells.

### Types of Transplants

The two main types of stem cell transplants are autologous (aw-TOL-o-gus) and allogenic (a-LO-jen-ik).

For an autologous transplant, your own stem cells are collected and stored for use later on. This works best when you still have enough healthy stem cells, even though you're sick. If you have cancer, the cancer cells are removed or destroyed from the collected cells.

For an allogenic transplant, you get stem cells from a donor. The donor can be a relative (like a brother or sister) or an unrelated person. You also may get stem cells from umbilical cord blood donated by an unrelated person.

To prevent problems, the donor's stem cells should match yours as closely as possible. Donors and recipients are matched through a blood test called HLA tissue typing.

### Collection Process

Stem cells used in transplants are collected from donors in several ways.

A procedure called aphaeresis (a-fer-E-sis) may be used. For this procedure, a needle is placed in the donor's arm to draw blood. Then, his or her blood is passed through a machine that removes the stem cells from the blood. The rest of the blood is returned to the donor.

Stem cells may be collected directly from a donor's pelvis. This procedure isn't used very much anymore because it must be done in a hospital using local or general anesthesia. For this procedure, a hollow needle is inserted repeatedly into the pelvis, and marrow is sucked out of the bone.

Blood containing stem cells may be collected from an umbilical cord and placenta after a baby is born. The blood is frozen and stored at a cord blood bank for future use.

#### Outlook

Stem cell transplants have serious risks. Some complications are life threatening. For some people, however, stem cell transplants are the best hope for a cure or a longer life. Who Needs a Blood and Marrow Stem Cell Transplant?

Your doctor may recommend a blood and marrow stem cell transplant if you have a disease or condition that prevents your body from making enough healthy blood cells. Examples of such diseases and conditions include:

- Some cancers, such as leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma, and breast cancer
- Severe blood diseases, such as thalassemias, aplastic anemia, and sickle cell anemia
- Certain immune-deficiency diseases, such as severe combined immunodeficiency syndrome, congenital neutropenia (kon-JEN-i-tal NU-tro-PE-ne-ah), and chronic granulomatous (gran-yu-LOM-a-tus) disease

Your primary care doctor and an oncologist or hematologist will determine whether you need a stem cell transplant. An oncologist specializes in diagnosing and treating cancer. A hematologist specializes in diagnosing and treating blood diseases and conditions.

When deciding whether you need a stem cell transplant, your doctors will consider:

- The type of disease you have and how severe it is
- Your age and overall health
- Other possible treatment options

You also will have tests to make sure you're healthy enough to have the procedure. Your doctors will want to find out whether you have any medical problems that could cause complications after the transplant. (See "What To Expect Before a Blood and Marrow Stem Cell Transplant" for more information.)

## What to Expect Before a Blood and Marrow Stem Cell Transplant

### Finding a Donor

If you're going to get stem cells from another person, your doctors will want to find a donor whose stem cells match yours as closely as possible.

A close match can reduce the risk that your immune system will attack the donor cells. It also reduces the risk that cells from the donor's marrow or blood will attack your body.

### Medical Tests and Exams

You also will need other medical tests and exams before a stem cell transplant. Your doctors will want to make sure you're healthy enough to have a transplant. They also will want to find out whether you have any medical problems that could cause complications after the transplant.

### Blood Tests

Blood tests are used to check for HIV, herpes, pregnancy, and other conditions. These tests help doctors learn about your overall health.

### Chest X Ray and Lung Function Tests

A chest x ray creates a picture of the structures in your chest, such as your heart and lungs. It can show whether your heart is enlarged or whether your lungs have extra blood flow or extra fluid.

Lung function tests tell doctors whether you have a lung infection or disease. They also show how well your blood is able to carry oxygen through your body.

### Computed Tomography Scan, Skeletal X Ray, or Bone Scan

These tests provide detailed images of your body. They're used to see whether you have any tumors in your bones that might complicate a transplant.

### Dental Exam

A complete dental exam is used to check for problems that might cause an infection after your transplant.

### Heart Tests

Heart tests, including EKG (electrocardiogram) and echocardiography, are used to find any conditions that might get worse after the transplant.

An EKG detects and records your heart's electrical activity. Echocardiography uses sound waves to create a moving picture of your heart. The picture shows how well your heart is working and its size and shape.

### Bone Marrow Biopsy

A bone marrow biopsy helps show whether your bone marrow is making enough healthy blood cells. If you're being treated for a blood cancer, this test shows whether your cancer is inactive.

What to Expect During a Blood and Marrow Stem Cell Transplant  
What Are the Risks of a Blood and Marrow Stem Cell Transplant?

The main risks of a blood and marrow stem cell transplant are infection, graft-versus-host disease (GVHD), and graft failure.

### Infection

You can easily get an infection after the transplant because your immune system is weak. The risk of infection decreases as your immune system recovers.

You can take steps to prevent infections, such as washing your hands and staying away from crowds. Doctors use medicines to prevent and treat infections.

Transplant recipients are sometimes given vaccines to prevent viruses and infections, such as the flu and pneumonia.

### Graft-Versus-Host Disease

GVHD is a common complication for people who get stem cells from a donor. In GVHD, the new stem cells attack your body.

Acute GVHD occurs within 90 to 100 days after the transplant. Chronic GVHD begins more than 90 to 100 days after the transplant or goes beyond 90 days after the transplant.

GVHD can be minor or life threatening. Signs and symptoms include:

A rash that starts on the palms of your hands and soles of your feet and spreads to your mid-section. Over time, the rash may cover your entire body. Skin can blister or peel if the rash is very bad.

Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach), vomiting, loss of appetite, abdominal cramps, and diarrhea. Doctors determine how bad GVHD is based on the severity of diarrhea.

Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes) and abdominal pain. These symptoms indicate liver damage.

Medicines are used to treat GVHD. Acute GVHD is treated with glucocorticoids, such as methyl prednisone, prednisone in combination with cyclosporine, antithymocyte globulin, or monoclonal antibodies.

Chronic GVHD is treated with steroids—usually cyclosporine and prednisone on alternating days.

Older people, people who have had acute GVHD before, and people who received stem cells from mismatched or unrelated donors are more likely to develop GVHD.

Doctors can reduce your chances of getting GVHD by:

Closely matching your stem cells to your donor's through HLA tissue typing.

Using medicines to suppress your immune system.

Removing some types of T cells from donor cells. T cells attack your body in GVHD.

Using umbilical cord blood as the source of donor cells.

### Graft Failure

Graft failure occurs if your immune system rejects the new stem cells. It also can occur if not enough stem cells are used, the new stem cells are damaged during storage, or your bone marrow is damaged after the transplant.

Graft failure is more likely in people who receive less preparation for their transplants. People who get stem cells from poorly matched donors also are more likely to have graft failure. Other Risks

Complications from chemotherapy and radiation treatment (used to prepare for a transplant) can occur long after a transplant. These complications may include infertility, cataracts, new cancers, and damage to the liver, kidneys, lungs, or heart.

### Cancer Relapse

In some people who get stem cell transplants to treat cancer (such as leukemia), the cancer eventually comes back. This happens more often in people who use their own stem cells for the transplant (an autologous transplant) than in people who get stem cells from a donor (an allogeneic transplant). This difference occurs because stem cells received from another person recognize new cancer cells as foreign and destroy them. This is called the graft-versus-tumor effect. A person's own stem cells don't recognize the new cancer cells as foreign. This allows the cancer cells to grow and multiply.

Doctors use immunotherapy to help prevent and treat the recurrence of cancer in people who've received a stem cell transplant. Immunotherapy is treatment that stimulates the immune system to attack cancer cells.



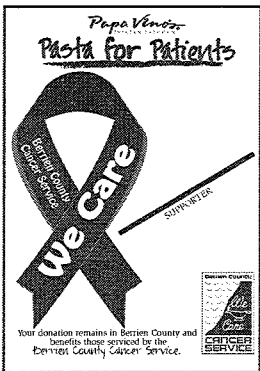
*Papa Vinos*<sup>®</sup>  
ITALIAN KITCHEN

# Pasta for Patients

BERRIEN COUNTY CANCER SERVICE

November 26-December 31, 2010

Papa Vinos' Italian Kitchen in St. Joseph will sponsor the 4th Annual Pasta for Patients to benefit the Berrien County Cancer Service.



Visit Papa Vinos' between November 26-December 31 and purchase a lavender "We Care" paper ribbon that will be displayed in the restaurant or make a donation to support the Berrien County Cancer Service.

Your donation remains in Berrien County and benefits those serviced by the Berrien County Cancer Service.

*Papa Vinos*<sup>®</sup>  
ITALIAN KITCHEN

1332 Hilltop Rd.  
St. Joseph, MI  
269.983.9900

[www.PapaVinosItalianKitchen.com](http://www.PapaVinosItalianKitchen.com)



# Looking Ahead

## **BCCS SUPPORT GROUP - Stevensville**

December 7 & 21 – 1:30 p.m.

January 4 & 18 – 1:30 p.m.

## **BCCS SUPPORT GROUP – Niles**

December 14 & 28 – 1:30 p.m.

January 11 & 25 – 1:30 p.m.

## **UOA SUPPORT GROUP – Stevensville**

December 21 – 1:30 p.m.

January 18 – 1:30 p.m.

## **RAINBOWS OF HOPE – Stevensville**

December 9 – 5:30 p.m.

January 13 – 5:30 p.m.

HELP, HOPE, BELIEVE

### **DATES TO REMEMBER IN DECEMBER**

December 1<sup>st</sup> – Special Kids Day

December 3<sup>rd</sup> – International Day of Disabled Persons

December 4<sup>th</sup> – National Cookie Day

December 6<sup>th</sup> – St. Nicholas Day

December 7<sup>th</sup> – National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

December 10<sup>th</sup> – Nobel Prize Day

December 15<sup>th</sup> – Bill of Rights Day

December 16<sup>th</sup> – National Chocolate-covered Anything Day

December 21<sup>st</sup> – Humbug Day

December 21<sup>st</sup> – World Peace Day

December 24<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Eve

December 25<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Day

December 31<sup>st</sup> – New Year's Eve

If Jimmy cracks corn and no one cares, why is there a stupid song about him?

Why does Goofy stand erect while Pluto remains on all fours?  
They're both dogs!

## *Please Consider...*

Berrien County Cancer Service, Inc., is a non-profit organization funded primarily by the United Way, private donations and fund-raisers. We receive no Medicare, Medicaid or other insurance payments. To continue our free services to Berrien County cancer patients, we need your help. Any donation is greatly appreciated.

Donations to our General Fund will help balance our current budget. Donations to our Endowment Fund will help guarantee that the Cancer Service will be available for as long as needed. Your contribution to our non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation is tax deductible – an acknowledgment and receipt for tax purposes will be sent.

Donations can be made in honor of someone or in memory of a loved one. In these instances, we would also like to send acknowledgment to the honoree or next-of-kin so please provide that information when making your donation.

\_\_\_\_\_ General Fund \_\_\_\_\_ Endowment Fund

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Donation Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Honoree's Address \_\_\_\_\_

OR

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

Please send notification of my gift to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

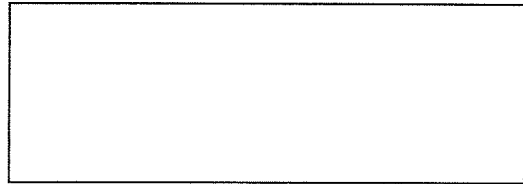
How would you like the card to be signed?

*Thank you for your generosity!*

Berrien County Cancer Service, Inc.  
7301 Red Arrow Highway  
Stevensville, MI 49127

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
STEVENSVILLE, MI  
PERMIT NO. 129



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**CANCER SUPPORT GROUP** – Stevensville Office  
1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month - 1:30 p.m.  
**Berrien County Cancer Service, Inc.**  
7301 Red Arrow Highway  
Stevensville, MI 49127  
Phone: (269) 429-3281 or (269) 465-5257

**CANCER SUPPORT GROUP** – Niles  
2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month – 1:30 p.m.  
**Niles Senior Center**  
1109 Bell Road  
Niles, MI 49120  
Phone: (269) 683-7460

**RAINBOWS OF HOPE GROUP** – Stevensville Office  
2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month – 5:30 p.m.  
**Berrien County Cancer Service, Inc.**  
7301 Red Arrow Highway  
Stevensville MI 49127  
Phone: (269) 429-3281 or (269) 465-5257

**THE CANCER CONNECTION CAFÉ**  
1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month  
**First United Methodist Church**  
132 S. Oak Street  
Buchanan, MI 49107  
Phone: (269) 695-2706

**MAN TO MAN** – Prostate Support Group  
3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month – 6:00 p.m.  
**Trinity Center**  
619 Main Street  
St. Joseph, MI 49085  
Phone: (800) 227-2345