



The Sunflower Fund

share a little save a life

Bone marrow stem cell donor recruitment – quick reference page

[Thank you](#) for enquiring about becoming a bone marrow stem cell donor on the South African Bone Marrow Registry (SABMR). Please read this information carefully.

Registration process

Joining the SABMR is simple:

You need [to call The Sunflower Fund Toll Free Number 0800 12 10 82](#) weekdays 08:30am – 13:00pm or 14:00 - 16:30pm so that we can make sure that you meet the criteria and will then complete your SABMR/Sunflower Fund Application Form with a Reference Number.

If you are not able to donate an amount towards the cost of your blood test (R2000), you will be added to the [waiting list](#) and when funds become available we will forward your form and [direct you to the closest Donor Recruitment Clinic](#).

There you will give them the completed form and they will take a [small blood sample – 2 test tubes](#). Your blood sample is then analysed and put on the national database.

Registered donors will in due course be sent [a donor card](#) by the SABMR. It is most likely that the [next time the SABMR will contact you](#) will be if you are identified as a suitable match for a patient. But please keep us informed of any [changes to your name, address and contact details](#) so that we can find you as quickly as possible if you are a suitable match.

Donors will only be called back to donate stem cells if they are ever a perfect match for a patient. The [donation is a minor medical procedure with little discomfort](#) – a full description can be found in the information overleaf.

CRITERIA TO BECOME A DONOR:

- Committed to helping anyone
- Between 18-45 years old
- General good health (not at risk of contracting hepatitis or sexually transmitted diseases)
- Weigh over 50kg

You will remain on the South African Bone Marrow Registry until you are **60 years old**.

Do not register as a bone marrow stem cell donor if:

- You think you might need a test for HIV, Hepatitis - B (HBV) or C (HCV).
- You have injected yourself (even once) with illegal or non-prescription drugs.
- You have taken money or drugs for sex.
- You have been exposed to hepatitis by contact with a family member or through your job.

You may be at risk of HIV or Hepatitis - B (HBV) or C (HCV) if you:

- Have had sex with any individual you think may be HIV or Hepatitis positive.
- Have had sex with any individual who has taken money or drugs in exchange for sex.
- Have had casual sex, sex with more than one person or sex with someone whose sexual history is not known to you.
- Have haemophilia or a related blood clotting disorder and received blood products/clotting factor concentrates before the introduction of routine screening and heat treatment of clotting factors in the late 1980's.

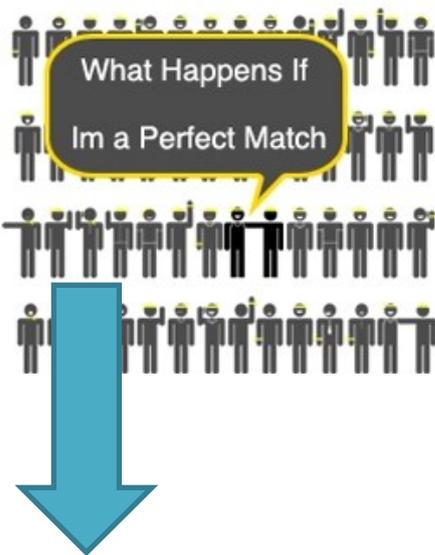
An important consideration when becoming a donor

It is vital that prospective donors realise that by joining the South African Bone Marrow Registry they could be called for **anyone needing a transplant, and not just the patient who first motivated them to join**. People are often keen to join the registry when they know the patient or when they become emotionally involved through press articles.

However, some donors who have been perfect matches for someone else are unwilling to donate, saying that they only joined the registry for one person! This is tragic, not only because money to test and register the donors was wasted, but those donors may have been the other patients' only hope for survival. Please think seriously about joining the registry as it is an important commitment. Note that if you sign up and drop out at a later stage, it costs time and money and could cost lives.

Donor confidentiality

All sensitive personal information is strictly confidential and can only be accessed by authorised staff. In compliance with **international agreement, strict anonymity is maintained between donor and patient.**



Our Payment Policy

The Sunflower Fund depends largely on donations from the public. We ask all donors to consider donating generously towards the **more accurate molecular (DNA) testing which costs R2000.00**. The full test costs The Sunflower Fund R2000. There are 4 donation options: **R350, R750, R1400 or the full test amount of R2000**. We would be extremely grateful if you are able to donate anything towards the cost of your test. There is no such thing as a small donation, every bit helps. (See overleaf on how patients and donors are matched).

Section 18A Certificates can be requested for your donation. After completing your application form, donors will be asked to deposit their donation in The Sunflower Fund bank account and fax or email their proof of payment to us. Your form will then be sent to you so that you can go for your blood test. Should you not be able to donate anything towards the cost of the test you will be added to the **waiting list** and when funds become available you will be sent your SABMR Application Form.

Banking Details

Account Name: THE SUNFLOWER FUND

Bank: ABSA 4051 834 719

Ref: Sunflower Ref. Number (given on registration to register call 0800 12 10 82)

Fax or email Proof of Payment:

Fax No. 021 701 6790

Email: donors@sunflowerfund.org.za

or reception@sunflowerfund.org.za

The medical procedure for obtaining stem cells from the blood is called a harvest. If you were asked to donate, you would be required to attend a specialist harvest centre in South Africa. A full medical examination will be carried out and if you are still agreeable, growth factor (G-CSF)* injections will be administered. These will increase the production of the stem cells in the bone marrow. These excess stem cells enter the bloodstream from where they are harvested using a cell separator machine. This minor medical procedure with minimal discomfort entails you being connected to the machine by an intravenous line (similar to donating blood or platelets) for 4 – 6 hours, possibly on two consecutive days. The precious bone marrow stem cells are filtered out of your blood and your own blood then returned to you. Thus you are able to go home immediately afterwards.

The harvest will take place in a private ward and the donor is often admitted for the night preceding the harvest as this has proved to be most comfortable and convenient, particularly if the donor is from out of town.

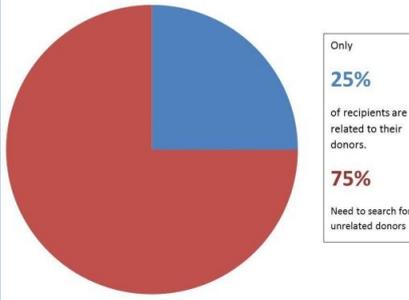
* Granulocyte colony stimulating factor (G-CSF). This is a protein which also occurs naturally in the body. It is given in order to mobilize the stem cells out of the bone marrow and into the circulating blood, where they can be collected for transplant. All individuals are at risk for developing cancer, including leukemia, lymphoma or other blood diseases throughout their life time. G-CSF stimulates normal cell growth. In some patients with cancer or abnormal blood cells, it has been shown to stimulate leukemic blood cells. It is unknown whether G-CSF increases or decreases an individual's risk of developing cancer. Based on available data from healthy people who have received G-CSF, no long-term risks have been found so far. The data being collected during follow-up of donors worldwide will help establish if there are any or long-term effects from receiving G-CSF. Approved: SABMR Board - 23 November 2007.

Are there any side effects for the donor?

Sibling transplants have been taking place for over 20 years; a short term side effect is flu-like symptoms during G-CSF stimulation; some donors have also reported mild bone pain.

Call 0800 12 10 82 should you have any queries or should you wish to register. Thanks again for being prepared to **"Share a little, to Save a Life"**. Please have a look at our website for more information at www.sunflowerfund.org.za

Patients searching for donors



1 : 100 000
chance of finding a **matched donor**



Why are unrelated donors needed?

Although family members – brothers and sisters in particular – may offer the closest matches, unfortunately 75% of patients will not have a suitable sibling, so have to search elsewhere.

How are donors and patients matched?

In the same way as red cell blood groups exist, so white cells can be categorised into groups known as “tissue types”. Thousands of tissue types exist, so finding the correct match depends upon having a very large register of donors. Because people’s genetic makeup is so varied and their tissue types are inherited characteristics, the chance of finding a suitable match can be slim. The likelihood of finding a matching donor will be considerably greater in donors from the same ethnic background as the patient.

Unfortunately the serological testing method is outdated and has become less reliable, but there is hope. DNA or molecular testing which is an exceptionally reliable test has been implemented at a cost of R2000.

It is much faster than serological testing and far more accurate. Regrettably, this testing is exceedingly more expensive, but it will save more lives and no price can be put on a life.

Ethnicity of Donors

In South Africa we have even more unique combinations of tissue types. Therefore it is very important that we have our own registry and the larger that registry, the greater and faster the chance of finding a perfect match. We desperately need donors from all ethnic groups and mixed ethnic backgrounds.

Can I change my Mind?

Most donors are delighted to hear that they have been chosen to donate - after all, that's why they joined the Registry. A potential donor may decline at any time. There is however, a point of no return for the patient.

When is the point of no return?

This stage is reached about a week before the actual donation when the patient’s own bone marrow is destroyed with high doses of chemotherapy in preparation for receiving the harvested stem cells. At this point the donor is seen to have a moral obligation to proceed because without the donation of stem cells the patient will die.

Please do not hesitate to contact The Sunflower Fund should you require any further information or assistance.

Email: donorqueries@sunflowerfund.org.za

Website: www.sunflowerfund.org.za

Toll free number: 0800 12 10 82

Thank you for being prepared to **“Share a little, save a life.”**