

It is estimated that a marrow or cord blood transplant could benefit more than **35,000** children and adults with life-threatening diseases each year. By volunteering as a bone marrow donor, you have the potential to save someone's life.

To register you need to:

- **Be between the ages of 18-60 years old and in good general health**
- **Give consent to be entered on the National Marrow Donor Program Registry**
- **Give a cheek swab sample**

You can register in one of three ways:

1. Visit a local drive near you. Check the NMDP's [calendar](#) for a list of drives.
2. Call or e-mail a local donation program, such as the [Asian American Donation Program](#)
3. Many local donation programs can provide you with a home-test kit if you cannot attend a drive. They will ask you a series of questions, and then send you a kit if you still qualify. **Kits may be fully funded for anyone of all or partial ethnic minority descent.**
4. Visit a local blood or marrow [donation center or hospital](#).

The **cost** for HLA tissue typing ranges from \$45 to \$96 depending on the donor center, the level of testing performed and the laboratory that analyzes the test results. [Some centers offer free testing for anyone of all or partial ethnic minority descent and some can defer the cost of your testing by asking for a donation of whole blood or blood components.](#) There also may be funding available through the donor center. After the initial testing, all medical expenses are covered by the recipient or the recipient's insurance. Please contact your local center for further information.

If you are identified as a potential match for a patient, NMDP donor center representatives will ask for another blood sample to see whether you match well enough to be an actual donor for the patient. If you are indeed a match, you will receive further education about marrow and PBSC donation processes and which is the preferred process for this patient.

[Approximately 30% of those tested will be called on to donate marrow](#) (if you are a match, it is up to you to decide whether or not you would like to donate marrow at the time that it is requested)

When you donate marrow, it is removed with a surgical needle from the back of your pelvic bone.

All marrow donors are given either general or regional anesthesia. Usually, four to eight tiny incisions are made in the pelvic area. These incisions are so small that stitches are not necessary. The procedure lasts between 45 and 90 minutes. Marrow is constantly regenerating itself and is replaced within several weeks.

[Approximately 70% of those tested will be called on to donate PBSC](#) (if you are a match, it is up to you to decide whether or not you would like to donate PBSC at the time that it is requested)

For a donation of peripheral blood stem cells, donors receive daily injections of a drug called Filgrastim for five days to increase the number of blood-forming cells in the bloodstream. The donor's blood is then removed through a sterile needle in one arm, passed through a machine that separates out the cells used in transplantation, and the remaining blood is returned through the other arm.

Following the procedure, donors can expect to feel some soreness in the lower back for a few days or some bone pain and aches for several days, but will return to normal health after a week or so.