

# Autologous Stem Cell Transplant: What to Expect During Your Hospital Stay

The following guidelines apply to being admitted to 7 West and what to expect during your hospital stay.



## Admission day:

- You will have an appointment the morning of your admission day with your transplant doctor to ensure that you are ready for your chemotherapy and transplant process to begin.
- You will then get a central line IV catheter (PICC line) placed. If you already have a Hickman central line IV catheter from apheresis, we can use that for chemotherapy/transplant instead of getting a PICC line placed.
- After your PICC line placement, you will go to the infusion area on floor 7 in clinic to receive chemotherapy and then be admitted to 7 West. If you are not due for chemotherapy until the next day, you will be admitted to 7 West at this point.
- Note: If 7 West does not have any open beds at this time, you will be sent to the admit lounge until we have a clean, open room for you. We are aware you are coming in, but sometimes we have to wait for patients to be discharged, housekeeping to clean the room, and then we can admit you.

## Admission and hospital stay:

- We will take a tour of the unit with you. We will show you where the nutrition room, family lounge, and laundry room are. We will also show you where you can walk in the halls.
- We will ask you several questions about your medications, screening questions, and other required documentation that has to be completed on admission day.



- We will review a list of current medications you are taking. If you brought medications that you are currently taking (actual bottles and pills), please send them home with your family. We will dispense all of your medications to you from our pharmacy. In the rare event that you take a medication that we don't stock, we will send your own home medication to pharmacy to verify it and then we can keep it locked up in the med cabinet in your room.

- We will show you how to order meal trays and guest trays from your room phone. You can order food from 6:30am to 8:00pm.
- There is a refrigerator in your room for food, it does not have a freezer component. There is a freezer in our nutrition room for any frozen foods that you plan to bring. Be sure to put your name on that food.
- There is a small couch or chair that converts to a bed for an overnight visitor. Minors need to be accompanied by an adult visitor at all times.

### **Routine nursing care:**

- We do vital signs every 4 hours at a minimum, even overnight.
- Nurses caring for you will do a full assessment of you and your symptoms. They will listen to your heart and lungs, look in your mouth, ask you questions about pain, nausea, diarrhea, etc.
- Labs and blood samples will be taken daily around 4:00am or 5:00am and sometimes in the evening.
- Weights are done every day.
- The doctor and other members of the transplant team will come each day to discuss and update your treatment plan.

## Day to day expectations of you:

- You need to shower every day with chlorhexidine soap that we will provide for you. This is to help prevent you from getting an infection.
  - We will show you how to use saran wrap to cover your central line to avoid it getting wet in the shower.
  - Do not use bar soap, use liquid soap only.
  - Do not use loofah, use a new washcloth each day.
- We will have you save all of your urine during your admission. We will show you how to do that and how to record it yourself.
- We will have you save your first bowel movement upon admission and at other times throughout your stay.
- You need to be walking in the halls at least 3 times a day. You do not need to wear a mask in the halls on 7 West but if you go off the floor for a test, we will have you wear a yellow mask.
- Once you are admitted, you cannot leave the unit. If you must leave, you will need to get nurse or doctor's approval.
- We will encourage you to drink 4-5 large cups of water per day to keep you hydrated.
- Use salt and soda mouth rinse 4 times a day to keep your mouth clean and prevent mouth sores.
- Brush your teeth 2 times a day.
- We will have you use an incentive spirometer several times a day. This is a breathing machine that will help keep your lungs expanded. The respiratory therapist will show you how to use it.
- We will show you how to use Sequential Compression Devices (SCD's) on your legs to help prevent blood clots.
- Be sure to put your call light on when your IV pump is beeping, it does not automatically alert us to when this occurs.



### **Infection prevention:**

- Wash your hands often, at a minimum before eating, after using the bathroom, and every time you or your visitors come in and out of your room.
- No sick visitors allowed on 7 West or in your room.
- No real flowers or plants, no latex balloons. Fake flowers and non-latex balloons are allowed.
- Do not wear contact lenses. Eye glasses only.
- Your IV pole will be attached to your central line continuously while you are admitted on 7 West. We do not unhook you for showers. This is for infection control purposes and to keep your risk of infection as low as possible.
- Visitors should not use the bathroom in the room unless instructed otherwise. There are public restrooms and a shower located around the unit.
- Refer to your FDA Food Safety booklet or dietician for specific food related questions.
- Screening tests will be done upon admission and each week on Wednesdays to determine if you are a carrier of certain bacteria that can cause infection if it is spread. These screening tests are done using a swab on the inside of your nose, the other is a rectal or stool sample swab.
- If you are put into contact or droplet precautions (where staff wear gowns, gloves, and possibly a mask into your room) we will prohibit you from using certain areas on the unit. We will give you more information on this if you are put into precautions.

### **Safety and fall precautions:**

- We will discuss fall precautions with you and give you a handout. Your safety is very important to us and there are multiple factors that could increase your risk of a fall.

- For your safety, please do not touch the buttons or manipulate your IV tubing on your IV pump. Put your call light on if pump is beeping.

### **Symptoms during your stay:**

- Keep us informed of all symptoms you are experiencing. Use your call light as needed to alert us to any symptoms you are having or if you need anything, this is how your nurses can help you be more comfortable.
- Symptoms to alert your nurse about:
  - Feeling hot or chilled
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Chest pain/tightness
  - Nausea/vomiting
  - Diarrhea
  - Mouth sores
  - Pain, headache
  - Nose bleed
  - Blood in urine or stool
  - **Or any other symptoms that are concerning to you!**

### **Blood counts:**

- We will write your labs/blood counts on the whiteboard in your room every day.
- Your chemo will make your white blood cell count and neutrophils decrease. This is when you are at most risk for infections.
- If your hemoglobin becomes too low, we will give you blood/red blood cells.
- If your platelets become too low, we will give you platelets. If you have a nose bleed or are bleeding from anywhere, we may give you platelets to help clot your blood at that point.
- Bleeding precautions - When your platelets are less than 50,000:
  - Do not floss

- Do not blow your nose harshly
- Do not rub your eyes
- Do not scratch your skin hard
- Do not strain with bowel movements
- Do not have sexual intercourse (vaginal or anal)
- Electric razors only
- Avoid popcorn and hard to chew items
- Avoid vomiting- call nurse for anti-nausea medications
- Nothing per rectum or vagina (no enemas, tampons, vaginal dilators)
- Notify staff of any signs of bleeding (nosebleeds, blood in urine/stool/vomit/sputum)

**Engraftment:**

- Engraftment is when your stem cells that you got on transplant day are growing and now functioning as normal cells. Engraftment typically takes a few weeks after your transplant date. We will alert you as to when you are engrafting and when we anticipate you being discharged from the hospital.
- When can you go home?
  - Once engraftment has occurred
  - When your symptoms have resolved (no fevers, nausea/diarrhea controlled with oral meds, etc.)
  - Eating and drinking well
  - Able to take all medications by mouth