

What to Expect on “Day Zero” of a Cellular Therapy Infusion

What is Day Zero?

Day Zero is the day you receive your new cellular therapy infusion.

Where will the procedure take place?

Your cellular therapy infusion will take place in your room with you lying in bed. You may have visitors if you like, as long as they are not sick. Your doctor may determine it is safe to have your infusion in the outpatient clinic. If you receive your cellular therapy infusion outpatient, this will occur in the BMT/Cellular therapy infusion center.

How will I prepare for the procedure?

- You may want to eat a light lunch or postpone lunch until after infusion.
- You will receive Tylenol® and Benadryl® before the procedure, which may make you drowsy. You may also receive anti-nausea medications if needed.

What will happen during the cellular therapy infusion?

- The blood bank will bring your cellular therapy to the room still frozen and will thaw it in a body temperature water bath. We double-check each bag to ensure you are receiving the correct cells.
- Your cellular therapy will be in a bag. The bag will be connected to your central line and the cellular therapy will be infused through your line. The cells cannot be infused through a pump and need to be infused within 12-15 minutes of thawing. This will prevent the cells from breaking down at room temperature. Each bag will also be rinsed when empty to help capture all cells.
- We will monitor you closely during the infusion and will take vital signs frequently.

- The cells multiply in your bloodstream.
- The cells find and kill the cancer cells.
- The cells may remain in the bloodstream to attack the cancer if it returns for months to years.

What are the common side- effects?

Side effects cellular therapy will vary from person to person and can be mild, moderate, severe or may even cause death.

Two of the serious side effects that can occur:

Cytokine Release Syndrome (CRS). CRS can happen in the first few hours to a few weeks after your cells are put back into your body. Symptoms include:

- Fever (pyrexia)
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Chills
- Low blood pressure (hypotension)
- Rapid heartbeat (tachycardia)
- Muscle/joint pain (myalgia/arthralgia)
- Weakness (asthenia)
- Low oxygen level (hypoxia)
- Breathing difficulty (dyspnea)

Neurotoxicity: Neurotoxicity can happen in the first few days to weeks after your cells are put back into your body. Symptoms include:

- Confusion
- Difficulty or inability to speak
- Difficulty staying awake
- Loss of coordination
- Difficulty walking
- Shaking movement
- Seizures
- Headache

What happens after the infusion?

After the infusion, you may be tired from pre-medications and lack of sleep in anticipation of the procedure.

You will be monitored closely by the doctor/nurse for possible side effects. There is a possibility that you may experience severe side effects that require treatment, a longer hospital stay, or may even cause death. Time in the hospital will vary based on your risk of side effects. You will go home as soon as the doctor feels it is safe. However, you may need to return to the hospital if you develop side effects after returning home.

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