



# Rutland Regional Medical Center

## *Marrow Donor Program*

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Phone: (802) 747-6267

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### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**How do I become a donor?** RRMC, and our affiliate programs, hold many testing drives each year. A list of upcoming drives is posted on our website, [www.rrmc.org](http://www.rrmc.org) (click on Our Services), or call us for the dates. To get your name on the National Registry, attend one of these drives, or call 802.747.6267 to make arrangements to be tested if there are no drives scheduled in your area.

**What is the cost to be a donor?** There is no cost to the potential donor. The cost for the tissue testing that places you on the Registry is covered by our programs. If you are selected as a donor, the National Marrow Donor Program pays all other costs. These include one person to accompany you and will include hotel, meals, gas, child care, pet care and any other expenses you may have associated with being a volunteer donor.

**Who is eligible to donate?** To be eligible to be a donor you must be between the ages of 18 and 60 and be in good general health. There are some health reasons that would require a potential donor to be deferred from the program, such as back problems, asthma, and heart problems.

**What is the procedure like?** The first step is to attend a drive. At the drive you will fill out a health screening and consent form, then swab the inside of your cheek to provide a DNA sample for the testing that will place you on the National Registry. If you are selected as a potential match, you will be called back for additional testing. If you are found to be a final match, you would travel to DHMC for the donation. There are two ways the donation can be done. The most common way is through a process called aphaeresis. This involves you receiving an injection for 4 -5 days prior to the donation. This injection will stimulate your stem cells to reproduce as a higher rate. On the 5<sup>th</sup> day your blood will be removed from your arm using a sterile needle and then a machine will separate the immature stem cells and your blood will be returned to you in your other arm. This process takes approximately 4 hours. The second procedure involves the bone marrow being taken from the back of your pelvic bone by a needle. There is no incision, and no stitches, to recover from. You may choose either general or local anesthesia. Plan on spending the night at DHMC if your donation is done this way.

**Does marrow donation hurt?** Following the procedure, donors can expect to feel some soreness in the lower back for a few days if you donate via the surgical procedure. Previous donors have said that the more you move around after your donation, the better you feel. There are no stitches to heal from and most donors are back to their usual routine in a few days. Side effects from the aphaeresis method include aches such as you would experience from the flu up until the day of donation. Once your donation is complete the soreness goes away. You may experience some lingering tiredness for a few days afterward.

**Where can I find more information?** You can find more information about RRMC's Marrow Donor Program on the RRMC web site, [www.rrmc.org](http://www.rrmc.org), by picking up one of the pamphlets available in the racks outside Public Relations at RRMC, by calling Kerry Ellis (ext 6267) or Irene Dazzi (ext 1649), or by emailing them at [kellis@rrmc.org](mailto:kellis@rrmc.org) or [idazzi@rrmc.org](mailto:idazzi@rrmc.org).

For more information on the National Marrow Donor Program, check out their web site at <http://www.marrows.org>, call Jennifer St. Peter at 1-401-248-5768, or email her at [Jennifer.StPeter@ribc.org](mailto:Jennifer.StPeter@ribc.org).

**I want to be a volunteer donor. Sign me up!** To sign up to participate in a testing drive, call or email one of the people listed above. You will be contacted to verify your registration.

**Is the testing drive open to the community?** The drives are open to anyone who would like to be a volunteer donor. If you know of a company or group who may be interested in participating as a group, please have them give us a call. We have lots of printed material to share and are willing to go talk to any group that's interested.