



# Talking with your healthcare team about graft-versus-host disease (GVHD)



There's a lot to discuss with your healthcare team before and after stem cell transplant, including the possibility of developing GVHD. The following questions and tips can help guide a conversation about GVHD with your healthcare team.

## BEFORE TRANSPLANT

You may want to ask your transplant doctor:

- What are my risk factors for GVHD after transplant?
- Is there anything we can do to lower my risk?
- Which healthcare provider should I call with questions about GVHD?
- Can I speak with other patients of yours who have had a transplant?

## AFTER TRANSPLANT

You may want to ask your healthcare team:

- How will all my healthcare team members communicate with each other and with me?
- What are the steps we're taking to lower my risk for GVHD?
- What signs or symptoms of GVHD should I watch for?
- Who should I call if I notice any?

## IF YOU DEVELOP GVHD

Don't be discouraged. You may want to ask your healthcare team the following:

- What should I know about what you've recommended?
- How serious is my GVHD?
- How might GVHD impact my recovery or daily life?
- If I need a specialist for this type of GVHD, can you refer me to someone in my area who's familiar with it?
- What should I know about my clinical trial options?
- Are there any resources that could be beneficial to me?
- Can you connect me with others who have been there?

## PREPARING FOR APPOINTMENTS

No one likes homework, but it's crucial to focus on understanding what your healthcare team is communicating to you. So, have your [Signs and Symptoms Watchlist](#) on hand and follow these tips to prepare for medical appointments.

## TIPS FOR IN-PERSON DOCTOR VISITS

- Make your appointment at a time of day you feel more alert
- Wear comfortable clothes and wear layers as temperatures may fluctuate
- Make sure you have a list of your medications; include your as-needed medications and how frequently you're taking them
- Tell your healthcare team how you've been feeling since your last visit (if you have a change in symptoms, contact them right away)
- The appointment may run late or go longer, so plan accordingly
- Bringing a friend, family member, or caregiver can be helpful, as they can take notes and remind you of what you want to discuss
- If you don't understand any terms or are unsure about something, just ask clarifying questions

## TIPS FOR TELEHEALTH VISITS

Sometimes, you may choose to have your appointments via video conferencing instead of in an office. Along with the tips above, you may want to consider doing the following:

- Have your telehealth visit in a comfortable, quiet space
- Test your camera and the sound before your virtual appointment
- Make sure the device you are using is fully charged
- Position yourself so the Healthcare Professional can see and hear you as well as possible
- Plan to log on to your appointment a few minutes early so you can manage any technical issues that may arise
- Have your list of questions or concerns handy

## NOTES TO DISCUSS

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**Download and print this discussion guide so you can have it with you for your next doctor appointment. Be your own GVHD advocate!**

