



# Working TOWARD Wellness

LIVE BETTER. LIVE LONGER.

W E L L N E S S B R O C H U R E

## THE GIFT OF LIFE

For many people, the majority of our time is spent thinking about the business of everyday life. We might take time to ponder some bigger issues, like planning a family, going back to school, or putting aside money for retirement. But, once in a while, we are forced to think about life and death issues.

Consider what happens when we, or someone we know, has a serious illness or injury. We may know someone who has lost their battle with a serious disease, like cancer. Or, perhaps someone we know has been in a serious car collision and requires emergency surgery to try to save their life. These kinds of situations often make us step back and ask, "What can I do to help?" or "What can I do to help prevent this from happening to someone else?". Perhaps reading this brochure will encourage you to help save the life of someone you know, someone who lives in another part of Canada, or even another part of the world.

At any given time, about 250 Canadians are waiting for a bone marrow match to be found, according to Canadian Blood Services (CBS). For most of these people, a bone marrow transplant is their only hope for long-term survival. However, fewer than 30% of them will find a family member with compatible bone marrow to donate. For the rest, an unrelated donor is the only available source of bone marrow.

Donating blood is also crucial to saving lives. Blood inventories in Canadian hospitals require constant replenishing. However, CBS reported in 2003 only about 3.5% of eligible Canadians gave blood. More blood is needed to meet the increasing demands brought on by an aging population and advances in technology and new medical treatments.

Read on to learn how easy it is to join the Unrelated Bone Marrow Donor Registry or to donate blood in your community.

## BENEFITS OF DONATING BONE MARROW OR BLOOD

- Offers the donor an enormous opportunity to feel that they have made a difference in giving a life-giving gift to another person.
- Increases the chances that a bone marrow match can be found.
- Provides long-term treatment options.
- Ultimately, saves lives!

### TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE... THEN READ ON. T F

1. About 250 Canadian are waiting for a bone marrow transplant at any given time.
2. In 2003, about 35% of eligible Canadians gave blood.
3. Stem cells in bone marrow grow into healthy bacteria found in our intestines.
4. It takes about 1-2 weeks for the actual bone marrow procedure to be done.
5. Up to 25 units of blood may be required for heart surgery.
6. The UBMDR stands for Unrelated Bone Marrow Donor Registry.
7. Donated blood goes under extensive testing for infectious diseases.
8. Fewer than 30% of patients waiting for a bone marrow transplant will find a family member with compatible bone marrow to donate.
9. The odds of finding a perfect bone marrow donor match may be as little as 1 in 750,000.
10. Once you join the UBMDR, you must stay on it for the rest of your life.

*see answers on back panel*



# WHY

## WHY IS OFFERING TO DONATE SO IMPORTANT?

Bone marrow is the tissue found in the soft centre of bones. It contains stem cells that grow into blood, including red cells that carry oxygen, white cells that fight infection, and platelets that help to stop bleeding.

A large number of eligible bone marrow donors are required from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. There are literally thousands of bone marrow tissue types, so it is very difficult to find a match for someone in need of a bone marrow transplant. In fact, CBS reports that the odds of finding a perfect match may be as little as one in 750,000. Therefore, offering to join the Unrelated Bone Marrow Donor Registry (UBMDR) increases the chance that a match can be found for a patient in need.

Donating bone marrow to someone who can't make healthy blood on their own offers them the best chance of recovery. It

allows them to make their own healthy blood once again. Once you are listed on the Registry, CBS will be able to access your information when a transplant donor is required, in Canada or the rest of the world.

Like bone marrow donations, there is a growing need to donate blood. In fact, CBS reports that every minute of every day, someone in Canada needs blood. It is needed to treat an increasing number of age-related health problems. For example, hip replacement and heart surgeries can require 5 to 25 units of blood, respectively. Also, advancements in medical treatments for cancer and multi-organ and bone marrow transplants need large amounts of blood.

# HOW

## HOW DO I DONATE?

Deciding to donate is an important and significant contribution that you can make to others. Whether or not you have made that choice here's some information to help give you a better understanding of the donation process.

### BONE MARROW

Volunteering to donate your marrow through the Unrelated Bone Marrow Donor Registry is easy. It takes a little bit of your time, a simple blood test, and a willingness to donate bone marrow to any patient in need of a transplant. The following are the steps you will go through in order to join the registry.

1. Assess your basic eligibility. You must be between the ages of 17 and 50, meet the height/weight criteria and be in good health.
2. Call 1-888-2-DONATE to receive an information package in the mail or visit the CBS website to view the package online. Read the required information and complete the accompanying form. Once the form is filled out, mail it to your nearest donor centre.
3. Within two to four weeks, you will be contacted to arrange a meeting to collect a small blood sample. The blood tests are used to identify specific proteins, called antigens, which are required to determine a match with a patient in need of a transplant. The results are strictly confidential.

Your information will then be added to the Registry, where it will stay until you turn 60, unless there is a change in your eligibility, or decide to withdraw from the program.

### What if I'm a match?

Only a small number of people on the Registry will actually have the opportunity to donate bone marrow. If you are found to match a recipient, you will be contacted by the Canadian Blood Services. You will then begin the exciting experience of giving someone the gift of life.

Once you have been called you can expect the following steps to happen:

1. Your blood will undergo additional testing to determine the full extent of your compatibility and will be tested for transmissible diseases.
2. You will then be asked to complete a physical examination and routine medical tests, such as a chest X-ray and urine analyses.
3. Once determined to be healthy and physically eligible to donate, you will speak with a Registered Nurse and the transplant physician.
4. The one to two hour procedure is usually an out-patient day operation. The marrow removal is done under general or spinal anesthesia, so that no pain is felt during the process. A needle is inserted into the pelvic bones at both sides of your lower back. Only 3% to 4% of your total bone marrow is removed and will be replaced by your body over the next few weeks after the operation.
5. During the following week you can expect some soreness at the donation site and fatigue, but that will be minor compared to the feeling of giving someone life.

## WHAT STOPS PEOPLE FROM OFFERING TO DONATE?

The American Red Cross reports the following reasons:

### “I’m afraid.”

Most people are, especially the first time giving blood. But, once you’ve made the first donation, you’ll wonder why you ever hesitated.

### “They’ll take too much and I’ll feel weak.”

The amount donated is small (about 2 cups or 450 mL) and can be replaced within about 24 hours. Most people continue their usual activities after donating.

### “Other people must be giving enough.”

This is not the case. There is a growing need for more blood donations.

When it comes to offering to join the Bone Marrow Registry, there is also fear of the unknown, fear of pain, and perhaps a phobia of needles. But, as with donating blood, once you have gone through the process of offering to donate, all of your doubts and worries will be addressed. The first step is to find out what exactly is involved.

# WHAT

Bone marrow extraction is used because it is the richest source of stem cells, which is what is needed by the transplant patient. On rare occasions, an individual may be asked to make a stimulated Peripheral Blood Stem Cell donation. This occurs only when requested by a transplant physician.

## BLOOD

Giving blood is also important, whether you join the registry or not. It requires only an hour of your time. There are only four steps required to give the gift of life.

1. Determine your basic eligibility. Anyone between the ages of 17 and 71, who weighs at least 50 kg (110 lb) and is in general good health, is a potential donor.
2. Find a convenient location. Throughout Canada there are 42 permanent collection sites and more than 15,000 annual donor clinics. To find the clinic nearest you, visit [www.bloodservices.ca](http://www.bloodservices.ca) or call 1 888 2 DONATE.
3. Go to the clinic. Be sure to eat something beforehand. Appointments can be made but are not mandatory.
4. Give blood.

### At the Clinic...

When you arrive at the blood clinic you will be asked to go through the screening process. This process involves a blood pressure and temperature check and completion of a questionnaire on general health, travel history, and high-risk activities. Although donated blood undergoes extensive testing for infectious diseases, the initial screening process is necessary to reduce the cost of screening blood that is known to be unsuitable for donation.

Once past the screening process, you are taken into the donation area where your arm is disinfected. A new, sterile needle is inserted and blood is collected in a sterile, sealed pouch, which holds approximately 450 ml or one pint. During the time of collection most people feel well and give without incident. Afterwards, you are given food and beverages to boost your blood sugar level. It is recommended to avoid strenuous physical activity for about six to eight hours after giving blood.

## MAKE IT HAPPEN ... AT YOUR WORKPLACE

Here are some suggestions to encourage people at your workplace to make donations.

- Join “Partners for Life”, a nationwide program designed for corporate and community organizations. By joining the program, your workplace makes a commitment to donating blood as a team. When you join, the Canadian Blood Services provides you with resources and support.
- Host an onsite donation clinic by inviting the CBS to come into your workplace. To arrange this call 1 888 2 DONATE (1 888 236-6283).
- Encourage employees to join the bone marrow registry by working through the process as a group. This can include arranging to have the blood samples taken at the same time.

## GO FOR IT!

### RESOURCES AND WEBSITES

Canadian Blood Services  
[www.bloodservices.ca](http://www.bloodservices.ca)

Katelyn Bedard Bone  
Marrow Association  
[www.GiveMarrow.net](http://www.GiveMarrow.net)

National Marrow Donor Program (US)  
[www.marrow.org](http://www.marrow.org)

[www.  
wechealthunit  
.org](http://www.wechealthunit.org)

# KATIE BEDARD

A sweet little girl, Katie, earned her angel wings this summer after battling Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML) for 18 months. She was only three years old. Katie's life may have been spared had she been able to get a bone marrow transplant before she ran out of time.

Katie was a very special person. She had beautiful brown eyes and a sweet little voice. She was a true "girl" and loved all things pink.

When Katie was diagnosed with Leukemia she was immediately admitted to the Children's Hospital in London, Ontario. Chemotherapy helped at first, but the Leukemia kept coming back. Her only hope for survival was a bone marrow transplant. A computer search was made of the world bone marrow registries to try to find a donor. Sadly, she was not able to get the life-saving treatment she needed because the right person just wasn't in the registry of bone marrow donors.

Please take the time to learn about bone marrow donation and join the registry. It could save a life.



## PASS IT ON!

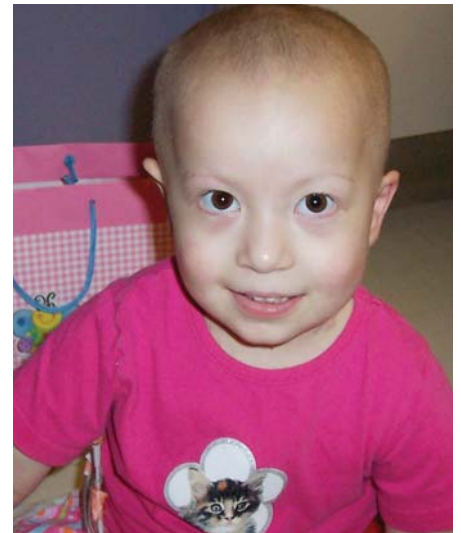
Please feel free to pass this brochure along to co-workers, family members, and friends.

# KATELYN BEDARD BONE MARROW ASSOCIATION

The Katelyn Bedard Bone Marrow Association was founded in July 2005 by Bryan and Joanne Bedard from Windsor, Ontario. Bryan and Joanne were inspired to create the association and website [www.givemarrow.net](http://www.givemarrow.net) after losing their daughter Katelyn to Leukemia at the age of 3. Sadly, she was not able to find a bone marrow donor (see side bar).

The mission of the association is to promote awareness about the worldwide bone marrow registries, to bring attention to the pressing need for bone marrow donors, and to encourage all healthy adults to consider joining the registry if they are eligible to do so. The website GiveMarrow.net is an information

centre to help people learn about bone marrow donation and make it easier for them to find out how to join the bone marrow registry in their country.



*"It is only by the giving  
of life that we can have life."*

E.J. Young

### Key References

American Red Cross. (2004). *10 excuses not to give blood*. Retrieved December 8, 2005, from <http://chapters.redcross.org/ca/norcal/donating/excuses.htm>.

Canadian Blood Services. (2003). *Someday, somewhere, someone will be thankful you registered to become a bone marrow donor*. ON: Author.

Canadian Blood Services. (2005). *Donors*. Retrieved December 5, 2005, from [http://www.bloodservices.ca/CentreApps/Internet/UW\\_V502\\_MainEngine.nsf/CategoryTrail?OpenForm&Category=Donors&Language=English](http://www.bloodservices.ca/CentreApps/Internet/UW_V502_MainEngine.nsf/CategoryTrail?OpenForm&Category=Donors&Language=English).

Answers (from front page): 1-T • 2-F • 3-F • 4-F • 5-T • 6-T • 7-T • 8-T • 9-T • 10-F

For more information about the Working Toward Wellness Program, please contact the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit at 258-2146 x 3100.

Copyright © 2006. Produced by the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and Heart Health Action Windsor-Essex.

