CONTACTS at the Avera Transplant Institute

Avera Transplant Institute
Prairie Center
1000 E. 23rd St., Suite 210
Sioux Falls, SD 57105
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Bone Marrow Transplant
Patient Newsletter

For more information about the Avera Transplant Institute and to view Medical Minutes and interviews with patients and physicians, go to AveraTransplant.org
THREE YEARS AFTER TRANSPLANT AND COUNTING

This summer, Dean and Therese Ahrendt will travel from their home in Hartford, S.D., to Alaska to celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary. Each mile will be one more little victory, because they had little assurance four years ago that they’d ever reach that milestone.

In early 2010, Dean was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer known as peripheral T-cell lymphoma. Doctors told him he had a 20 percent chance of surviving this cancer with traditional treatment. A bone marrow transplant would bring his chances up to 40 percent, although he was warned that it would be rough. “I knew it would be rough, but I didn’t know it would be that rough,” Dean said.

Dean, who had managed the Hartford Farmer’s Elevator for the past 36 years, was prone to back trouble. Yet when his pain got more and more...
A Time to Heal for All Cancers
Among survivorship programs is “A Time to Heal,” a 12-week holistic rehabilitation program designed to help men and women regain physical, emotional, intellectual, psychological and spiritual health after undergoing cancer treatment. People who have completed this program say they have greater satisfaction in life and stronger feelings of well-being. Call 605-322-3000 for details.

Take Charge of Your Nutrition
Learn to maximize your nutrition and discover ways to manage side effects of treatments. The Avera Cancer Institute has a dietitian available to assist with your nutrition concerns. Call 605-322-7929 to set up an appointment.

Look Good, Feel Better
This program is offered to women who deal with the outward side effects of chemotherapy and radiation on hair and skin. It occurs the second Tuesday of the month from 1 – 3 p.m. and the fourth Wednesday of the month from 4 – 6 p.m. Call 605-322-3235 to register.

Spiritual Care
Spiritual Care Services can help an individual sort through complex emotional and spiritual issues. Call Lara Pesce, Chaplain, at 605-322-3258.

Aromatherapy
Samples are available in patient care areas. Please inquire with staff.

Medical Acupuncture
Acupuncture is available on Mondays and Fridays. Acupuncture helps reduce stress and the discomfort of cancer treatment side effects. Call 605-322-5240 for appointment times and fees.

Therapeutic Massage
Therapeutic massages, 30–60 minutes in length, are offered on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Free 15-minute massages are offered on Tuesdays. Call 605-322-8470 for appointment times and fees.

Classes in the Mind and Body Studio
These classes use the mind-body approach, focusing on mindfulness, gentle movement, posture, breath and visualization, and are facilitated for all fitness levels. If interested, call 605-322-3241 for a list of class offerings and times.

A family celebration in Dean’s hospital room, complete with balloons and cake, signified that it was his new birthday.

“Please Keep Us Informed”
Please notify us at 605-322-3017 or 866-686-1062 if you have an address change so you can continue receiving correspondence from us.

severe, he sought answers. Eventually, an MRI showed a tumor wrapped around his spinal cord.
After surgery, Dean had 10 rounds of radiation and four rounds of chemotherapy before he was ready to undergo a stem cell transplant under the care of Avera Medical Group Hematology & Bone Marrow Transplant.
Dean was able to donate his own cells, which would be reinfused after intense chemotherapy and radiation to kill all the cancer cells in his body.
Oct. 27, 2010, was transplant day. A family celebration in Dean’s hospital room, complete with balloons and cake, signified that it was his “new birthday.”
Because Dean’s immune system was brought down to virtually nothing, he nearly lost his life to a couple of serious infections. “And there were times when I didn’t feel like living.”
Dean remembers the day when Dr. Kelly McCaul walked into his exam room in the spring of 2011. “He had a bounce to his step. He said, ‘We almost lost you, but I can honestly say you don’t have any signs of cancer,’” Dean said.
He made it through his first 100 days after the transplant, and then went back to work at the elevator. Dean worked part time and then full time for a year before retiring, but he still maintains a small cow/calf operation on his property just west of St. George Catholic Church, where they attend.
“It’s our new normal,” Therese said. Dean stays close to home, takes care of the cattle and fixes supper, while Therese works part time in Salem, S.D., as a clinic nurse.
Over the past three years, Dean and Therese have cherished time with their family of three children and seven grandchildren. With friends, they traveled to Cancun, Mexico, and will travel to Alaska this summer.
Dean and Therese said it meant so much to receive this lifesaving treatment near home. “There were days when Dean would be down and I’d call the kids, and they’d get him smiling and laughing. I can’t imagine going through this without your family and church nearby,” Therese said.
A caregiver’s role is rewarding but may be challenging in many different aspects: emotionally, physically or even financially. It is important that caregivers are involved in their loved one’s care by attending appointments when possible, by asking questions and by providing overall support. However, caregivers need to take the time to care for themselves. It can be overwhelming at times and it may feel as though it is impossible to ask for help. There are several websites to assist you in getting organized and a way to set up a caregiver team:

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“Caregivers need to take the time to care for themselves.”

FOCUS ON THE CAREGIVER
Inserts provided by Melanie Hericks

BE A LIFESAVER

Giving Others the Opportunity to Save Lives—One Donor Drive at a Time
Every four minutes someone is diagnosed with a blood cancer according to bethematch.org. That is 360 people a day, 15 people an hour. We have all been touched by these statistics and wish there was more that we could do to help save lives of those directly affected. Well, the bone marrow transplant program at Avera is doing just that by teaming up with BeTheMatch to sign up willing stem cell donors. Most of this is done through donor drives where our staff sets up donor booths, educates and raises awareness, and assists in the screening and registration process of those interested in joining the donor registry. Most recently, the staff volunteered at the St. Baldrick’s Cure Kids Cancer Fundraiser and the JY6 Foundation Nurses Dinner where 21 and 27, respectively, people signed up to be put the donor registry. Since the beginning of the year, 22 people have signed up just from the public awareness standpoint. That is 70 people total this year alone! April was National Donate Life Month, and we held a donor drive on Tuesday, April 22, to increase our numbers even more.

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In 2014, the Avera Transplant Institute was awarded its fourth renewed accreditation from the Foundation for the Accreditation of Cellular Therapy (FACT). In addition to being an accredited donor collection facility, Avera McKennan’s apheresis center on 3East also participates with the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP). This means that bone marrow donors can donate their cells at Avera McKennan for a transplant patient anywhere in the world who needs this match. These lifesaving cells help people with leukemia, lymphoma, multiple myeloma and myelodysplastic syndrome. Only about half of the people needing a donor from NMDP will find a match. Therefore, it is important that individuals volunteer to join the registry at bethematch.org. It is as simple as doing a cheek swab to be placed on the registry. As you can see, our work is not done. Until there are enough donors, we need to continue to be advocates for donation by raising awareness. So please ask your friends, neighbors and family members to join us in becoming organ donors to save more lives in our region.
Rochelle Rentschler, RN, is the Quality Manager for Avera's bone marrow transplant program. In this role, she is responsible for regulatory issues and helps maintain Avera's accreditation through the Foundation for the Accreditation of Cellular Therapy (FACT). She ensures that evidence-based practice guidelines, care standards, policies, procedures and quality measures are closely followed.

“We're constantly re-evaluating and evolving in order to provide the very best patient care that we can,” she said. Rochelle graduated from nursing school at the University of Minnesota Duluth in 2004, and began working as an inpatient nurse on 3East at Avera McKennan. She then began working as an apheresis nurse, and served as apheresis coordinator from 2009 to 2012, when she took on her current role.

Rochelle, a native of northern Minnesota, is married, and enjoys spending time with her two children, ages 3 and 1. Her husband farms near Hills, Minn., and the family lives in Larchwood, Iowa. When and if she has spare time, she enjoys reading.

“Although I miss the patient interaction of traditional nursing care, I love working on the quality management side of our program to help ensure that we continue to improve and remain on the cutting edge, as we provide this lifesaving service right here in Sioux Falls, with the same high quality that's offered by major cancer centers in large metropolitan areas.”

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“There are only four kinds of people in the world: those who have been caregivers, those who currently are caregivers, those who will be caregivers and those who will need caregivers.” – Rosalynn Carter

Summer Reminders
We all look forward to the warm weather and fun that summer brings. The Avera Transplant team wants you to get out and enjoy all that it offers, but we also want to remind you of some summertime specific precautions to take:
• Soil: Gardening and taking care of your yard exposes a bacteria risk. Wear gloves, wash hands, keep nails short and clean, wear mask if dusty, and limit your exposure.
• Sun: After treatment, exposure to UV rays increases skin cancer risk. Wear long sleeves and pants, use sunscreen appropriately, and limit your exposure to the sun.
• Food: During grilling season, limit your exposure to smoke and fully cook your meat, but try not to char food.
• Fun: Summer often brings increased risk behavior activities. Wear helmets and protective gear on bikes, limit alcohol intake, and only swim in clean water.

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BMT CONNECTIONS

Avera’s bone marrow transplant support group, “BMT Connections,” welcomes anyone affected by bone marrow transplants. We especially encourage our patients and their loved ones before, during and after transplant to join in the activities and discussion to not only receive support, but offer it to others going through the same journey. BMT Connections meets the second Thursday of every month at 4 p.m. in the Prairie Center. The Prairie Center is located at 1000 E. 23rd St., on the Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center campus. Future topics include:

- Open discussion
- “Chemo brain”
- Provider speaker
- Dietitian speaker

Cancer Survivor Day Picnic
Sunday, June 1 * Noon – 1:30 p.m.
Meal provided. Hope to see you there!

TRANSPLANT MEDICATION MINUTE:
FLUCONAZOLE (DIFLUCAN)

One of the potential risks related to bone marrow transplants is infection. These infections can come from a number of sources, but stem from three major categories: bacteria, viruses and fungi. Because your immune system will be unable to defend itself against these organisms, your doctor will prescribe medications that decrease the risk of infections. To protect you from fungal infections, your doctor may prescribe you with fluconazole. Fluconazole, brand name Diflucan, is an antifungal medication. It works by interrupting fungal and yeast growth to prevent colonization and thus infections. Your doctor will want you on fluconazole until your blood counts normalize. This can take anywhere from two to six weeks after a bone marrow transplant. If your transplant requires the use of steroid medications or other drugs that affect your immune system, your doctor may continue the use of fluconazole.

Be aware that the most common adverse side effects with fluconazole are headaches, nausea and diarrhea. Please notify your doctor if these symptoms become intolerable. Additionally, if you notice a rash, this could indicate an allergy to the medication and should be reported to your doctor immediately. Because fluconazole can affect the liver and heart, notify your doctor if you experience any yellowing of skin or eyes or fainting spells. Oral fluconazole should be taken with a full glass of water and may be taken without regard to meals.

“QUEEN’S CORNER”

We hope this insert can help put a smile on your face. Whether through positive thinking or humor, Patti Swenson, RN, will be offering this entertainment section for each newsletter. Enjoy!

A Sunday school teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the Bible: Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the verse. Little Bobby was excited about the task, but he just couldn’t remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line. On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Bobby was so nervous. When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, “The Lord is my shepherd . . . and that’s all I need to know!”

A little boy walked down the beach, and as he did, he spied a matronly woman sitting under a beach umbrella on the sand. He walked up to her and asked, “Are you a Christian?” “Yes.” “Do you read your Bible every day?” She nodded her head, “Yes.” “Do you pray often?” the boy asked next, and again she answered, “Yes.” With that he asked his final question, “Will you hold my quarter while I go swimming?”

A 3 year old put his shoes on by himself. His mother noticed the left was on the right foot. She said, “Son, your shoes are on the wrong feet.” He looked up at her with a raised brow and said, “Don’t kid me, Mom. I KNOW they’re my feet.”
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STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Rochelle Rentschler, RN
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Hematologist
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AVERA MCKENNAN FOUNDATION BONE MARROW TRANSPLANT FUND

The Bone Marrow Transplant Fund through the Avera McKennan Foundation supports programs and services for those receiving transplants and their families. A contribution enhances support for transplant patients by providing educational materials and integrative medicine to promote wellness to the mind, body and spirit.

Gifts to Avera McKennan help perform miracles every day. Your gifts:

• Advance and support health care delivery and patient care.
• Benefit patient programs and services.
• Assist with the cost of patient care services not covered by medical insurance.
• Provide Journey Totes – a binder that serves as a guide and reference along the transplant journey.
• Provide Care and Comfort gift baskets – a useful alternative for patients who cannot receive flowers due to infection risk. Baskets are personalized for the patient’s needs.

The effects of your kindness are profound and far-reaching.

To give to the Bone Marrow Transplant Fund, visit AveraMckennanFoundation.org or call the Foundation office at 605-322-8900. Thank you.