

MAPPING THE MAZE: FINANCIAL PLANNING BEFORE TRANSPLANT

There is a lot to think about when you plan for a blood or marrow transplant, including how to pay for the transplant and related costs.

By planning early and understanding your income, expenses and available financial help, you can be better prepared.

READ ON TO **LEARN ABOUT:**

- Spending plans
- How to manage debt
- Taxes
- Getting financial help

SPENDING PLANS

A spending plan is a budget. Budgets help people organize their money and prepare for unexpected financial changes.

Your budget helps you keep track of how much money you have each month. It also helps you see where you spend your money. Use the *Budget Worksheets* to help you get started.

Listed below are steps you can take to help you as you make your spending plan.

LEARN ABOUT YOUR **INSURANCE COVERAGE**

Every health insurance plan is different, so you should talk to your insurance company as soon as you can. This way you can know ahead of time what your insurance will pay for and what you may have to pay. Once you are at a transplant center, a financial coordinator can also help you. The financial coordinator will talk with you about your health insurance and finances, and can talk to your insurance company to help you understand your coverage.

The financial coordinator can also help you arrange for payment for your transplant. Here are some questions you can ask your transplant center's financial coordinator:

- How can I break the cost into payments?
- What is the amount of each payment?
- When is each payment due?
- Will interest be added to my balance?

Learn more in *Mapping the Maze: Transplant and Health Insurance*.

TAKE YOUR **FINANCIAL INVENTORY**

A financial inventory is a list of your assets (what you own) and your liabilities (what you owe). If you subtract your liabilities from your assets, you will know your net worth. Use the *Assets and Liabilities Worksheet* to help you estimate how much money you could access, if needed.



FIGURE OUT YOUR OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS

Out-of-pocket costs are costs your insurance company doesn't pay that you must pay on your own. Your out-of-pocket costs may be directly related to your transplant, like co-pays for doctor's visits. Or, they can be indirectly related to your transplant, like travel costs and temporary housing near the transplant center.

Use the information about your insurance coverage to estimate your out-of-pocket costs for the transplant. The *Indirect Transplant Costs Worksheet* can help you get started.

The financial coordinator at your transplant center will help you plan for costs insurance doesn't cover and find other financial resources that may be available.

HOW TO MANAGE DEBT

Many people have changes in their income and spending after transplant. If you're in debt, there are things you can do to have more control of your money. Even if you don't usually have a lot of debt, when you go through transplant you will have new medical bills and possibly less income each month. Listed below are things you can do to help manage your expenses and reduce your debt.

LOWER YOUR MONTHLY PAYMENTS

Call your creditors (the people you owe money) and explain your situation. Many creditors will understand and work with you. Try to agree on lower, more manageable monthly payments.

If you need help talking to creditors about lowering your payments, call a nonprofit consumer credit counseling service. These organizations can help you set a budget. They can also work with your creditors to come up with a payment plan.

Call (800) 388-2227 or visit the National Foundation for Credit Counseling at nfcc.org for more information.

LOWER YOUR MONTHLY SPENDING

Another way to manage debt is to lower your monthly spending. When you look at your budget, look for areas where you can spend less and save money. Remember, your health insurance, rent or mortgage, utilities and taxes are the most important bills to pay each month.

ASK FOR DISABILITY WAIVERS

You may also get disability waivers for major loans like a home mortgage, car loan and credit cards. These waivers may give you a break from your monthly payments while you can't work during your recovery. Ask your transplant center financial coordinator or social worker for help on how to ask for a waiver.

EXPLORE OTHER INSURANCE AND DISABILITY PROGRAMS

Your transplant center's financial coordinator or social worker can help you learn how to access other options you may already have in place, including:

- Long-term care insurance that pays for care in a long-term care facility
- Accessing disability programs, such as short-term and long-term work-related coverage and Social Security Disability Insurance that pay some of your income if you are not able to work
- Mortgage insurance that protects the lender, or bank, if you can't pay your mortgage. Your mortgage insurance company could help you change your home loan so you can have a lower monthly payment.
- Viatical life insurance settlement that lets you sell your life insurance at a discount for cash

TAXES

You may be able to save money on your taxes by claiming the medical expense deduction. If you file an itemized tax return, you can take away medical expenses that are more than a certain percentage of your income. Talk to a financial planner or accountant about your records and what is tax-deductible.



KEEP TRACK OF RECEIPTS

To get your full tax deduction, keep track of prescriptions and receipts. Ask your doctor to write a prescription for medicines, wheelchairs or any special equipment that you need. When prescribed by your doctor, these items are generally tax deductible.

Here are some things you should save:

- Bills and receipts for medicines
- Receipts for parking fees, gas, and bus or subway fare for doctor's visits
- Mileage driven to and from the doctor's office
- Hotel bills, if the stay is for medical care
- Receipts for wheelchairs or any special equipment that you need

IRS

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) *Publication 502* provides more information about what qualifies for this income deduction. You can order a free copy of the form by calling (800) 829-1040, or download a copy from irs.gov (click on "Forms and Pubs").

GETTING FINANCIAL HELP

Be The Match® has financial aid programs to help some patients:

- The Search Assistance grant can help pay for donor HLA testing.
- The Transplant Support Assistance Fund can help pay for some costs during the first 12 months after transplant that are not covered by your insurance. This is only for patients who had a transplant facilitated by Be The Match.

Ask your transplant center social worker about these options. They will also help you:

- Find financial aid available through Be The Match and other organizations
- Find out if you qualify for financial aid
- Complete the applications

OTHER RESOURCES TO HELP YOU PLAN

Be The Match has a variety of free resources to help you plan for transplant. Visit BeTheMatch.org/patient-during and choose the resources that best meet your needs. Here are just a few that you might find helpful:

- Booklet: *Transplant Basics*
- Webcast: *Getting Ready for Your Child's Marrow or Cord Blood Transplant*



AT EVERY STEP, WE'RE **HERE TO HELP**

LEARN: BeTheMatch.org/patient EMAIL: patientinfo@nmdp.org

ORDER: BeTheMatch.org/request CALL: 1 (888) 999-6743



Every individual's medical situation, transplant experience and recovery is unique. You should always consult with your own transplant team or family doctor regarding your situation. This information is not intended to replace, and should not replace, a doctor's medical judgment or advice.

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES WORKSHEET

Using this table as a guideline, make a list of what you own (your assets). Next, make a list of what you owe (debts or liabilities). Subtract what you owe from what you own to estimate your net worth.

Assets*	Value
Home	\$
Car	\$
Checking account(s)	\$
Savings account(s)	\$
Other investments (mutual funds, stocks, bonds, etc.)	\$
Retirement plan(s)	\$
Life insurance cash values	\$
Furniture and artwork	\$
Jewelry and collections	\$
Rental property	\$
Business	\$
Other	\$
Total Assets	\$

Liabilities	Amount Owed
Home mortgage(s)	\$
Car loan balance	\$
Credit card debt(s)	\$
Other loans	\$
Other debts	\$
Total liabilities	\$
Net Worth (Assets minus liabilities)	\$

*Note: List assets at liquidation value rather than replacement value. Liquidation value is what you can sell the item for. Replacement value is the cost to replace the item with a new one.

INDIRECT TRANSPLANT COSTS WORKSHEET

The costs listed are indirectly related to the transplant. They need to be part of your total financial plan. You may have covered some of these costs when you talked to the health insurance company representative. These are often large costs that are sometimes covered, but often are not. Be sure to review these costs in your financial plan.

Costs	Estimate	Amount covered by insurance
Testing to find a matched donor or cord blood unit	\$	\$
Donor costs	\$	\$
Injections to stimulate cells before collection	\$	\$
Getting cells from the donor or cord blood unit	\$	\$
Harvest/storage fees before transplant	\$	\$
Backup collection of cells	\$	\$
Travel expenses to and from the transplant center for patient and/or caregiver	\$	\$
Temporary lodging expenses near the transplant center for patient and/or caregiver	\$	\$
Food costs while staying near the transplant center (including eating at the hospital cafeteria)	\$	\$
Parking costs	\$	\$
Wigs, hats, or scarves	\$	\$
Child-care costs	\$	\$
Office visits coverage	\$	\$
Home health care	\$	\$
Mental health care for patient and caregiver	\$	\$
Clinical trials	\$	\$
Sperm/egg storage	\$	\$
Insurance premiums when patient is not working	\$	\$
Prescription co-pays for medicine	\$	\$
Fees to prepare your home after transplant (carpet and drapery cleaning, replacing filters on heaters, air conditioning cleaning)	\$	\$
Other changes in cost of living after transplant	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
Total	\$	\$

BUDGET WORKSHEETS

Patients and caregivers are usually not able to work for some time after transplant. Having a financial plan helps patients, caregivers and families focus on healing.

Use these worksheets to record your household's income and expected costs for 1 month. If either your income or costs change, change the amounts on the worksheets.

Monthly Household Income

Income	Per month
After-tax wages	\$
Tips or bonuses	\$
Child support	\$
Alimony (spousal support)	\$
Unemployment income	\$
Social Security or Supplemental Security Income	\$
Retirement plan(s) (pensions)	\$
Disability insurance payments	\$
Public assistance	\$
Food stamps	\$
Interest/dividends	\$
Other	\$
	\$
	\$
Total Income	\$

BUDGET WORKSHEETS *(continued)*

Next, calculate how much you spend each month. Use this worksheet to list all your monthly household costs. You may have extra medical expenses some months. Update the worksheet each month to include additional medical expenses and other changes in spending.

Monthly Household Costs

Costs	Per month
Rent or mortgage	\$
Heating/air conditioning and electricity	\$
Water/sewer	\$
Telephone/Internet/Cable	\$
Cell phone	\$
Groceries	\$
Prescription medicines	\$
Over-the-counter medicines	\$
Car payments	\$
Car repairs and gas	\$
Other transportation payments (bus fare, taxis, train)	\$
Homeowner's or renter's insurance	\$
Car insurance	\$
Health insurance	\$
Other insurance payments, like dental insurance, life insurance or supplemental insurance.	\$
Doctor bills and copays	\$
Dentist bills	\$
Hospital bills	\$
Child care	\$
Loan or credit card payments	\$
Entertainment (eating out, movies, cable, satellite)	\$
Miscellaneous expenses (gifts, classes, vacations)	\$
Savings or IRA contributions	\$
Taxes (other than wage withholdings)	\$
Other (pet care, for example)	\$
Charitable giving or donations	\$
Total Costs	\$

BUDGET WORKSHEETS *(continued)*

Now, subtract your monthly costs from your monthly income. If your spending is more than your income each month, you will end up with debt. For help managing debt, read the fact sheet *Mapping the Maze: Financial planning before transplant*.

EXAMPLE A: No debt	
\$3,000	Monthly Income
-\$2,800	Monthly Costs
\$200	Remaining/Debt

EXAMPLE B: Debt	
\$3,000	Monthly Income
-\$3,100	Monthly Costs
-\$100	Remaining/Debt

Month: _____	
	Monthly Income
	Monthly Costs
	Remaining/Debt

