



You could save the life  
of a person who needs  
a stem cell transplant



**THE REGISTRY OF LIFE**

**Sign up to become a potential stem cell donor.**

## **The Registry of Life!**

A large number of patients in Quebec are waiting for a stem cell transplant. They are counting on the Registry of Life: a list of potential unrelated stem cell donors. An "unrelated donor" is someone who is not a member of the patient's family.

These patients are hoping to find a compatible donor. For most of them, a stem cell transplant is the last chance to overcome a serious illness.

You can help them! It's very easy to sign up for the Registry of Life managed by Héma-Québec. Many patients owe their lives to the millions of men and women listed in similar registries around the world.

## **What are stem cells?**

Stem cells are "mother" cells: all other blood cells develop from them. These cells are found in the bone marrow, the umbilical cord blood of newborns and peripheral blood, which flows in your veins and arteries to and from your heart.

→ CARMEN,  
DONOR



## How are compatible donors chosen?

In fact, the decisive factor is not the blood type (A, B, O or AB) but the antigens in the HLA system. These “antigens” are proteins found on the surface of white blood cells. Once you have joined the Registry, the results of the analysis of your antigens will be entered in our database and will remain confidential. When a physician is looking for a volunteer donor, we search this database. If no match is found in this database, we consult donor registries worldwide, which contain more than 20 million potential unrelated donors.

## Who can sign up for the Registry of Life?

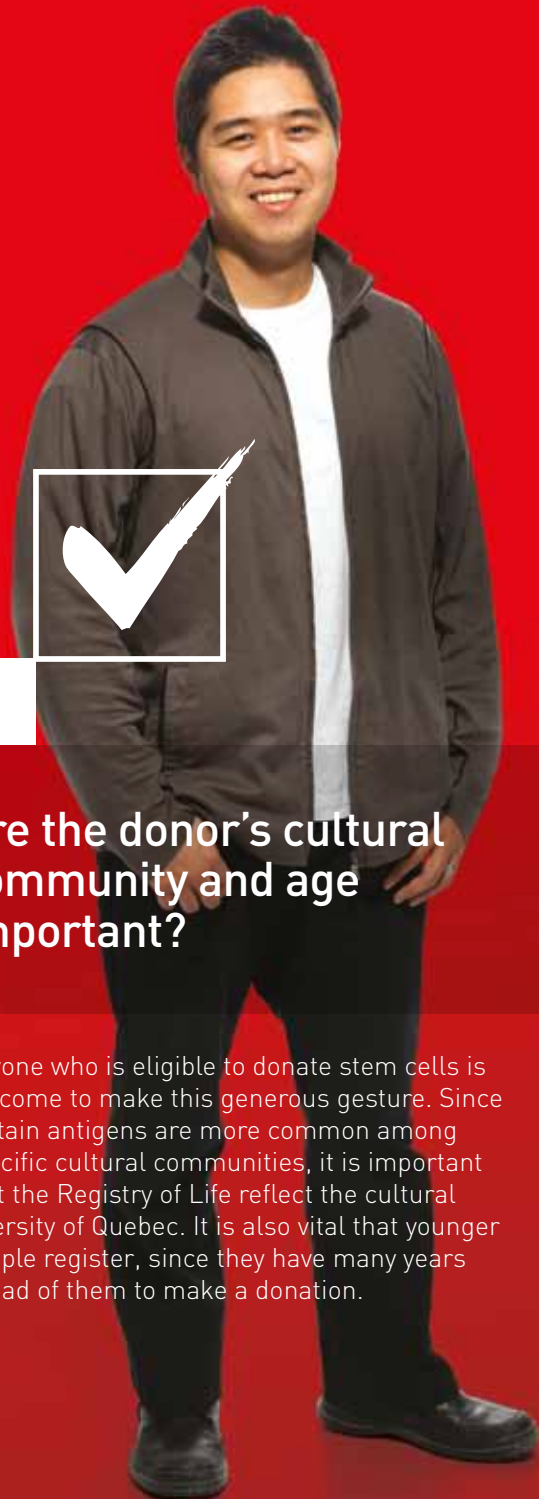
To sign up for the Registry of Life, you must meet the following conditions:

- ✓ Be aged between 18 and 35
- ✓ Be in good health
- ✓ Be willing to donate stem cells to anyone who needs them

→ ANDY,  
DONOR

## Are the donor's cultural community and age important?

Anyone who is eligible to donate stem cells is welcome to make this generous gesture. Since certain antigens are more common among specific cultural communities, it is important that the Registry of Life reflect the cultural diversity of Quebec. It is also vital that younger people register, since they have many years ahead of them to make a donation.



## What should you expect?

### After signing up for the Registry of Life

Only a small number of people will actually have the opportunity to donate stem cells. If you are selected, we will contact you to ensure you are still prepared to go ahead with this generous act. We will explain the next steps to you at this time.

### During the collection

First, there are two types of collection. One consists in collecting bone marrow. The other is done by the apheresis of stimulated peripheral stem cells. The transplant physician will determine which method is better for the patient's well-being.

### → Bone marrow collection

For this type of collection, you are admitted to hospital on the day of the procedure or the day before. The stem cells are removed from your bone marrow under general anesthesia or epidural (local anesthesia administered in the lower back). As you lie on your stomach, the physician inserts a special needle into your hip bones removing about 5% of your bone marrow (which your body will regenerate within a few weeks). The procedure takes from one to two hours. You will be released from hospital the same day or the next day.

### After the bone marrow collection

There may be some short-lasting side effects, such as fatigue or pain at the needle entry site. This pain is similar to what you feel after you fall on the ice or strenuous exercise.

→ NANCY,  
RECIPIENT



## → Collection of stimulated peripheral stem cells by apheresis

When collecting stimulated peripheral stem cells by apheresis, the donor is first injected with a substance that increases the number of stem cells in the bloodstream. The cells are then collected using a procedure known as “apheresis”. The blood is taken from the donor’s arm using a needle and goes through a centrifuge, which separates the stem cells from the rest of the blood. It is finally returned to the bloodstream of the donor.

## After a donation by apheresis

There may be some short-term side effects, such as fatigue, headache and bone and/or muscle pain, which can be relieved by taking acetaminophen. These side effects are comparable to how you feel when you have a bad cold.



→ BRUNO,  
RECIPIENT

## Does it help if I give blood?

Giving blood is an excellent way to help patients. Indeed, people who receive stem cells often need large amounts of blood before and after a transplant.





## Team up with us!

Order your kit to join the Registry of Life.  
For more information, visit our Web site at  
[www.hema-quebec.qc.ca](http://www.hema-quebec.qc.ca)  
or call us toll-free at  
1 800 565-6635,  
ext. 279.

