

Planning for Potential Chimeric Antigen Receptor (CAR) T-Cell Therapy

CAR T-cell therapy uses your own immune cells (T cells) to attack cancer cells.

First Steps:

- Planning for your CAR T-cell therapy an ongoing process. You will meet with your interdisciplinary team as part of the planning and evaluation phase, including your Nurse Coordinator, Social Worker, and Financial Coordinator.
- This therapy is expensive and will require pre-authorization with your health insurer.
- There will be multiple medical tests to help determine if this therapy is right for you.
- You may need to see other physician consultants, including Psychiatry, Cardiology, and/or Infectious Disease.
- If CAR T-cell therapy is recommended by the BMT team and approved by your health insurance, dates of treatment will be scheduled. Sometimes treatment dates change due to a variety of reasons. You will be kept informed of these changes.

It is a process:

- Before you can be hospitalized for your CAR T-cell infusion, your blood will be filtered through a machine that collects some of your T-cells. This collection happens in our outpatient Apheresis unit and typically takes 4-6 hours.
- Your cells are then shipped to a laboratory and modified to contain CAR T-cells.
- Approximately 3-4 weeks later, your CAR T-cells will be ready for infusion. First, you will receive 3 days of low dose chemotherapy in the outpatient setting.
- On the morning of your CAR T-cell infusion, you will be admitted to the hospital.

Inpatient Hospitalization:

- Most patients need to plan on an average length of hospitalization of approximately 1 – 1 ½ weeks following their CAR T-cell infusion to be monitored for side effects.

Need for Support at Home after Discharge and Location from the Cleveland Clinic Main Campus Hospital:

- Patients who receive CAR T-cell therapy and live greater than 2 hours driving distance from Cleveland Clinic's Main Campus are required to stay in Cleveland for 4 weeks following their CAR T-cell infusion.
- You are required to have someone stay with you for 24 hours a day for four weeks following your CAR T-Cell infusion.
- Do not drive or operate heavy machinery for 8 weeks after your CAR T-cell infusion.

Disability Issues:

- Patients who receive CAR T-Cell therapy, are typically off work for 3 months.
- If you are currently working, talk with your employer about applying for Family Medical Leave (FMLA) and Short-Term Disability.
- Social Security Administration defines disability as someone who will be unable to work for a year or more; if you have been unable to work prior to transplant due to treatment needs, you may consider applying for Social Security Disability.

Lodging Needs:

- *Please check your insurance provider for any travel and lodging benefits.*
- There are reduced hotel rates offered to patients and families. For more lodging information, please contact the Taussig Cancer Patient Support Coordinator office at 216-445-8886.

Additional Information:

- Further information about CAR T-Cell therapy can be found on the websites:
- www.lls.org
- www.yescarta.com
- www.clevelandclinic.org/bmt