

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 a BMT Physician, 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 receive your CAR T-cell infusion, your blood will be filtered through a machine that collects some of your T-cells. You might require a temporary catheter to collect these 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.
- In certain instances, it is possible to give you the CAR T-cell infusion in the outpatient setting. Other times, you will be admitted to the hospital on the morning of your CAR T-cell infusion.

For Inpatient Hospitalization:

- For patients who will be admitted, 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.
- After discharge from the hospital, you and a responsible caregiver must stay within 2 hours of driving distance from Cleveland Clinic's Main Campus for 4 weeks following your CAR T-cell infusion.

- You are required to have a caregiver stay with you for 24 hours a day for 4 weeks following your CAR T-Cell infusion.
- Do not drive or operate heavy machinery for 8 weeks after your CAR T-cell infusion.

For Outpatient Treatment:

- If you will be treated in the outpatient setting, plan on daily appointments after your CAR T-cell infusion for at least the first week.
- During that first week following infusion, you will be required to stay within 1 hour of Cleveland Clinic's Main Campus, have a responsible caregiver with you for 24 hours a day, and the caregiver must be able to drive.
- You and your caregiver will then be required to stay within 2 hours of Cleveland Clinic's Main Campus until 4 weeks following your CAR T-cell infusion.
- You are required to have a caregiver stay with you for 24 hours a day for 4 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 CAR T-cell therapy 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.clevelandclinic.org/bmt