

Tips collected from the following Support Groups

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A. Costs to Budget for:

- Accommodation for one month
- Travel- gas, ferries or airplane (car rental or taxis)
- Food for you and caregiver for one month
- Funds for prescription drugs on discharge if needed
- cancellation insurance for accommodation recommended in case transplant is delayed

B. Accommodation

1. BC Cancer 1450 West 12.th Avenue
 - a. \$55.00 per person per night
 - b. Pros
 - cost includes 3 meals per day including packed lunch if needed
 - staff are extremely friendly and helpful
 - With Covid meals are delivered to room Caregiver does not need to source food
 - twin beds with curtain between so one person can read while other sleeps
 - own bathroom (shower only)
 - Shoppers Drug Mart one block away
 - c. Cons
 - street parking is difficult
 - very close quarters- choose a caregiver who can handle illness
2. Furnished Apartments- check Vancouver Coastal Health Website (recommended accommodations). <http://www.vch.ca>
3. Hotels with medical rates- most near Vancouver General offer Medical Rates
4. Friends/Family- as you will be severely compromised you need a room where you can be separate to avoid infection. You will have to travel early to Vancouver General at least every second day so consider keeping the shortest distance.

C. Financial Assistance

1. Travel Assistance Program- (TAP)

You can get a TAP form from your doctor's office (specialist or FP)
The form provides a free return ferry trip for car and driver and escort if needed or a reduced airline rate.
Follow the instructions on the form to register the trip

2. Service Clubs are often willing to help if you write a letter explaining your situation
3. “Go Fund Me” has worked for some people
4. For low income patients the social worker at Victoria Hospital has found funding to cover the total cost of the Cancer Lodge.
5. Taxi vouchers are available as needed for travel to and from the Cancer Lodge to the hospital. Ask at the hospital.

D. Comfort Tips

1. The side effects of transplant seem to be different for everyone. It is important that you let your nurse know what you are suffering. Do not minimize as there are things that can be done to lessen most side effects. There is no benefit in being “a stoic patient”.
2. You will probably be cold as your hemoglobin will be very low. Your head may be continually cold so take a toque. Take layers of warm clothes, fuzzy socks and a cozy blanket or two. If you have access to a clothes dryer the blanket can be heated up for comfort.
3. You may have long days sitting in a lounge chair at the hospital while you have IV Fluid or Blood Transfusions. It is helpful to have books, playing cards, crossword puzzles, sudoku, phone or video games or knitting or other crafts.

C. Caregivers:

It is very difficult to stand by and see your loved one in distress.

You will need to provide food, rides, medication, and care. You will likely get very tired as you will sleep with one ear open for a month. If you have anyone in the city that can give you a break take advantage of it but make sure they understand they cannot help if they have any signs of a cold or other infection. If your patient is comfortable get out for a walk, a trip to the store a manicure or a massage or whatever will feel good. You can almost always go out when your patient is having a treatment at the hospital.

It is helpful to designate one person to give daily updates to so friends/family can call them instead of you. They can also contact people to help if groceries or other things are needed.

Take a to record any special instructions and to write down questions for staff.

You or your patient may become quite overwhelmed or emotional at times. Share it with staff- they are incredibly kind, supportive and helpful.

D. Group Support- Contact a support group leader (above) with questions before, during and after your transplant as often as needed.