

## **Make a Match**

### **Debunking the myths about stem cell donation**

#### **Signing up to become a donor takes time**

Registering to become a donor is a quick and easy process. First you need to check your eligibility.

If you are eligible, you can request a swab kit from the DKMS or Anthony Nolan websites. Once completed, you send the swabs back to the registering organisation which will analyse your tissue type and enter your details on the UK stem cell registry.

Your details are then stored anonymously and can be searched for people all over the world who need matching stem cells.

#### **Donating stem cells is painful**

According to Anthony Nolan, 90% of donations are carried out through a process similar to giving blood called peripheral blood stem cell donation (PBSC). This is a simple painless process.

Some people experience mild flu-like symptoms, but these usually go away in a day or two.

Only 10% of donations are from bone marrow and this procedure takes place under general anaesthetic, so you won't feel any pain. Afterwards, you may feel a bit tired and bruised, and could need to take a few days off work.

#### **If I sign up to the register, I will have to donate**

You'll only be asked to donate if you're a match for someone with blood cancer or a blood disorder who is in urgent need of a lifesaving transplant.

According to Anthony Nolan, people who are on the register have a 1 in 800 chance of being asked to donate. However, these chances depend on age and sex. A young man aged 16-30 has a 1 in 200 chance of being chosen to donate.

By signing up to the register though, you should be willing to donate.

#### **Lesbian, gay or bisexual people cannot donate stem cells**

Sexuality or gender identity does not impact eligibility to join the stem cell register. Everyone who wants to join must go through the same health and suitability checks.