

When to Bring Up CAR T in Your Myeloma Journey

What to Know: You do not need to wait for disease progression to ask about CAR T. Even newly diagnosed patients can express interest early, and it helps your team prepare.

What You Can Do:

- Tell your doctor early on if CAR T is something you want to learn about.
- Ask about referral timing to a CAR T center, especially if your numbers begin to rise
- If newly diagnosed, ask whether any frontline CAR T trials might be appropriate for you.

[Source](#)

CAR T vs. Other Treatment Options

What to Know: CAR T is powerful but not the only effective therapy. Some people may not be ideal candidates (e.g., severe heart failure, early dementia). BCMA-targeted alternatives include bispecific antibodies and antibody drug conjugates (ADCs). These options can be spaced out (every 1–3 months) and may suit older or frail patients.

- If you want CAR T later, sequencing matters because some therapies can affect future eligibility.

What You Can Do: **Ask** your doctor to compare CAR T vs. bispecifics and ADCs for your situation and how today's treatment choices affect future CAR T later.

- Discuss how each option affects travel, time off work, and caregiver needs.

[Source](#)

Bridging Therapy & Lymphodepletion: What to Expect

What to Know:

- **Holding therapy:** Used to reduce the volume of myeloma (or myeloma burden) as much as possible before CAR T.
- **Bridging therapy:** Used *after* collection while your CAR T cells are being made.
- **Lymphodepletion:** A short, 3-day chemo (cyclophosphamide + fludarabine [Cytosan + Fludara) that prepares your immune system for CAR T.

What You Can Do: **Ask** how your team will monitor whether bridging therapy is working. Discuss what happens if your numbers don't drop enough. **Ask** about side effects of lymphodepletion and how to prepare.

Staying Safe After CAR T: Coordinating Care at Home

What to Know:

- Most patients stay near the CAR T center for 2–3 weeks, then your local oncologist will monitor your blood counts, infections, and IVIG (often needed monthly from 3–6 months). Your CAR T team stays involved and provides 24-hour contact.

What You Can Do:

- **Ask** for copies of your CAR T summary & medication list. Report new symptoms early. Keep everyone updated.

Getting to CAR T: Overcoming Access Barriers

What to Know:

- Geography, transportation, and finances can delay CAR T but support exists. CAR T centers, organizations like [Blood Cancer United](#) and social workers can help with housing near the center, transportation, financial assistance, and caregiver support.

What You Can Do:

- Tell your team early about transportation or financial concerns. Request help getting on housing waitlists to stay near the center. Ask to meet with a social worker at your first CAR T consultation.

[Source](#)