



My name is Shaheen Vora and I donated Peripheral stem cell PBSC in October 2010.

I had registered myself during a bone marrow drive on 15th August, India's Independence Day anniversary in 2005. I gave my mouth swab and registered it. Over the course of the years, I completely forgot about my registration until some five years later in June 2010 when I received a phone call from the bone marrow registry program, where I was advised that I am a possible match for a patient who is a thirty-two-year-old mother of two looking for bone marrow donor. I was excited with the thought that I was about to participate in such a noble cause. Before long, I was asked to get a few blood tests at one of the prescribed location to check for any possible infection in my blood and to verify whether I was a complete match for the recipient.

I went in for blood tests a couple of time before I received a call sometime in September advising me that I am a 100% match for the patient and whether I was ready to donate. For me, there was no looking back as i was ready both mentally and physically. In the meantime, I solicited words of wisdom from a couple of friends - are doctors and family members. All of them gave me much encouragement and were delighted to know that I am a possible match

for a bone marrow recipient. I had a very hectic and busy schedule working full time as a travel agent and taking care of my business working 40 hours and more a week when you run your own business. Bone marrow donation was not a big challenge to me at all because the entire process was very easy.

Ever since I was little, I have had a phobia of needles. Having flu shots would make me nervous. However, to my delight, the entire process for PBSC went very smoothly. Everyone at the bone marrow registry program were very cooperative. Right from the beginning when I received the first call in June until October 2010 when the bone marrow transplant took place, they helped me in understanding the entire process step by step. I was given neupogen shots some three days before the donation to increase white blood cells. People in my situation usually complain about feeling exhaustion but surprisingly, I felt fresh and active, and with the grace of God, was feeling normal after the shots.

On the day of the donation, my sister was with me for moral support. The process lasted for four hours and the nurse who was attending was very pleasant at MD Anderson Hospital in Houston TX. I derive great satisfaction that I was able to make a difference in someone's life. At times, people who are possible matches they do not want to donate thinking the process would be difficult or a harm to their health. It has been some six years since I have donated and I am leading a healthy life. I was in good health after I returned home from donating. I highly encourage the community at large to consider registering as a bone marrow donor. In our Asian community, there are very few people who are found as possible matches and are willing to donate. We need to encourage as many people as possible to register

and if found to a possible match for a bone marrow, go forth and should donate. There are many people in this world fighting the battle of cancer. Someone's child, father, mother, brother, sister. I have lost three beautiful women from my family. Two of my dad's sister my foi and one of my kaki aunt. When one member is diagnosed with cancer the entire family goes thru the ordeal. I would request all to make an effort to register. Maybe you are one of the match for a cancer patient waiting to get a transplant. Just by a very simple process you can save someone's life and I feel there is no other greater cause than saving a life.