

BMAC: aftercare

Harvest-site care, recovery and urgent warning signs

There are two sites to look after

Follow the separate instructions for your marrow harvest and treatment site. If BMAC was used during surgery, the operation's rehabilitation and weight-bearing plan takes priority.

The first day

- Keep both dressings clean and dry as advised. Check for unexpected bleeding or rapidly increasing swelling.
- Mild bruising or soreness at the harvest site can occur. Use the pain-relief plan you were given; do not add medicines that may increase bleeding without advice.
- Arrange help or transport where necessary. If you had sedation or general anaesthesia, follow the hospital's specific supervision, driving, alcohol and machinery restrictions.
- Do not drive until medication or anaesthetic effects have cleared and you can safely control the vehicle, including an emergency stop. Seek specific advice if the lower limb was treated.

Walking and loading

Restrictions depend on the diagnosis. A joint injection, a cartilage operation and a nonunion procedure have different requirements. Follow the written plan for weight bearing, crutches, boot or brace. BMAC does not override the protection required after fixation, cartilage surgery or bone grafting.

Medicines and recovery

Do not stop or restart anticoagulants, aspirin or antiplatelet medicines independently. Ask for a written plan agreed with the prescriber. If blood-clot prevention is required because of surgery or reduced mobility, use it as instructed.

Rehabilitation usually progresses in stages under the treating team. Symptoms may fluctuate, and useful improvement is uncertain. Attend the arranged review and any imaging required for bone healing or the accompanying operation.

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Get urgent advice

Seek prompt assessment for persistent bleeding, spreading redness, discharge, fever, a hot swollen joint, rapidly increasing swelling or pain at either site, new numbness or weakness, or unexpected inability to walk. If a dressing is bleeding, apply firm pressure while obtaining help.

Call 999

Call for breathing difficulty, collapse, facial/throat swelling, chest pain or sudden breathlessness. A new painful swollen calf needs urgent assessment for a possible clot; chest symptoms with it are an emergency.

Your individual aftercare - clinician completed

Procedure date / harvest and treatment sites	
Dressing / bathing and wound-check plan	
Medication / pain relief / blood-clot prevention	
Weight-bearing status / aids / brace	
Exercises / physiotherapy / restrictions	
Sedation, driving, work and sport advice	
Review / imaging dates and outcome goal	
Treating service / urgent contact / opening hours	

Follow-up and contact

Report continuing harvest-site pain as well as symptoms at the treated area. For routine practice enquiries: 07427 297799. This is not an emergency service. For post-procedure problems use the treating hospital's discharge contact, NHS 111 or urgent care as appropriate.

Evidence and further reading

1. Cambridge University Hospitals: Bone marrow aspiration and trephine biopsy. Current online patient information; accessed 10 October 2026.

2. Mautner et al. Cell-based versus corticosteroid injections for knee osteoarthritis. *Nature Medicine*. 2 November 2023; author correction 22 December 2023.

3. Shapiro et al. BMAC versus saline for knee osteoarthritis. *American Journal of Sports Medicine*. January 2017.

Links checked 10 October 2026. This material synthesises the sources; local protocols may differ.