



So tomorrow's the big day! We're all very excited. It's hard to believe that it's finally here. It has always seemed like this event was so far-off. I have definitely felt like transplant day could not happen fast enough, and sometimes, I was scared it would never be here.

But we are finally here. It's the last day of radiation treatment (hooray!) and the day before transplant. It's quite fitting that Michelle's transplant is happening a week before Thanksgiving as we have so so much to be thankful for.

So tomorrow's schedule is pretty relaxed. Dr. Delaney's team will let the 5/6 match cord blood unit thaw out and will deliver the cord blood to Michelle's hospital room. It will be transfused through Michelle's catheter into her bloodstream just like a blood or platelet transfusion. It's actually quite simple. Pardon the lack of medical terminology...but then the little suckers already know where to go...basically Michelle's lower back bones.

Four hours later, Michelle will get her 2nd cord blood, a 4/6 match, which has been expanded by Dr. Delaney's team for the last two weeks. Last we checked, she had 30 flasks of it so now is probably when it's going through a harvesting process that takes all the stem cells from the 30 flasks and it's "put" into a smaller volume. That's probably a really crude way of explaining a very complex procedure. Thank god for the smart people at the Hutch.

And that's it...that's the "transplant". From there on, the two cord blood units will fight Michelle's current body (hopefully any leftover leukemia cells), which it will think is foreign to each unit and I guess sort of fight it out against each other. Within the next 3 weeks hopefully, one of the units will win out and engraft (i.e. accept Michelle's body) and will produce white blood cells, red blood cells and platelets for Michelle. At this point, Michelle will start feeling a lot better. In the meantime, we will be busy managing the side effects of all the chemo and radiation and will have to be super careful in terms of infections.