

Young Oklahoma stem-cell patient Tallie Anderson still faces health hurdles

SPOKESWOMAN FOR TISSUE DONATION RECEIVES NEEDED TRANSPLANT

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A stem cell transplant for [Tallie Anderson](#) went well, but there have been dangerous complications, her father said Monday.

The 11-year-old [Shawnee](#) girl, who has become a state spokeswoman for the need for bone marrow donors, underwent a transplant Friday at [OU Medical Center](#) to cure a rare blood disorder. Her father, [Roger Anderson](#), said the transplant was performed without a problem, but on Saturday, Tallie had a hint of heart failure and respiratory difficulties.

"She's a fighter," the father said. "She's fine now, but it's been touchy."

Tallie's complications are likely from the chemotherapy she underwent in the days before the transplant, said [Rachel Posey](#), an advanced registered nurse practitioner. Posey works directly with [Dr. Laura Rooms](#), who is overseeing Tallie's care.

Posey said chemotherapy depleted Tallie's stem cells so donor cells could replace them. Donor cells came from a baby's umbilical cord that was frozen until the transplant.

The cord was thawed at Tallie's bedside and then millions of cells, equaling about a tablespoon, were given to Tallie intravenously, Posey said. It took about 15 minutes.

Once in her veins, the cells were to make their way into her bone marrow, where stem cells are produced, Posey said. It will take about three weeks to see measurable results.

Complications from chemotherapy pose the biggest risk for Tallie. Her body in its weakened state is more susceptible to infections and other problems, Posey said.

If Tallie's body rejects the cells, the procedure can be repeated with another donor, she said.

Tallie has aplastic anemia and waited about two years for a donor. Tallie was unable to quickly find a match with a bone marrow donor, which is a problem for many patients of American Indian descent like her.

She joined with the [Oklahoma Blood Institute](#) to raise awareness about the shortage of Indian donors. Her story accounted for about 250 Indian donors being added to the registry in [Oklahoma](#), blood institute representatives said.

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