

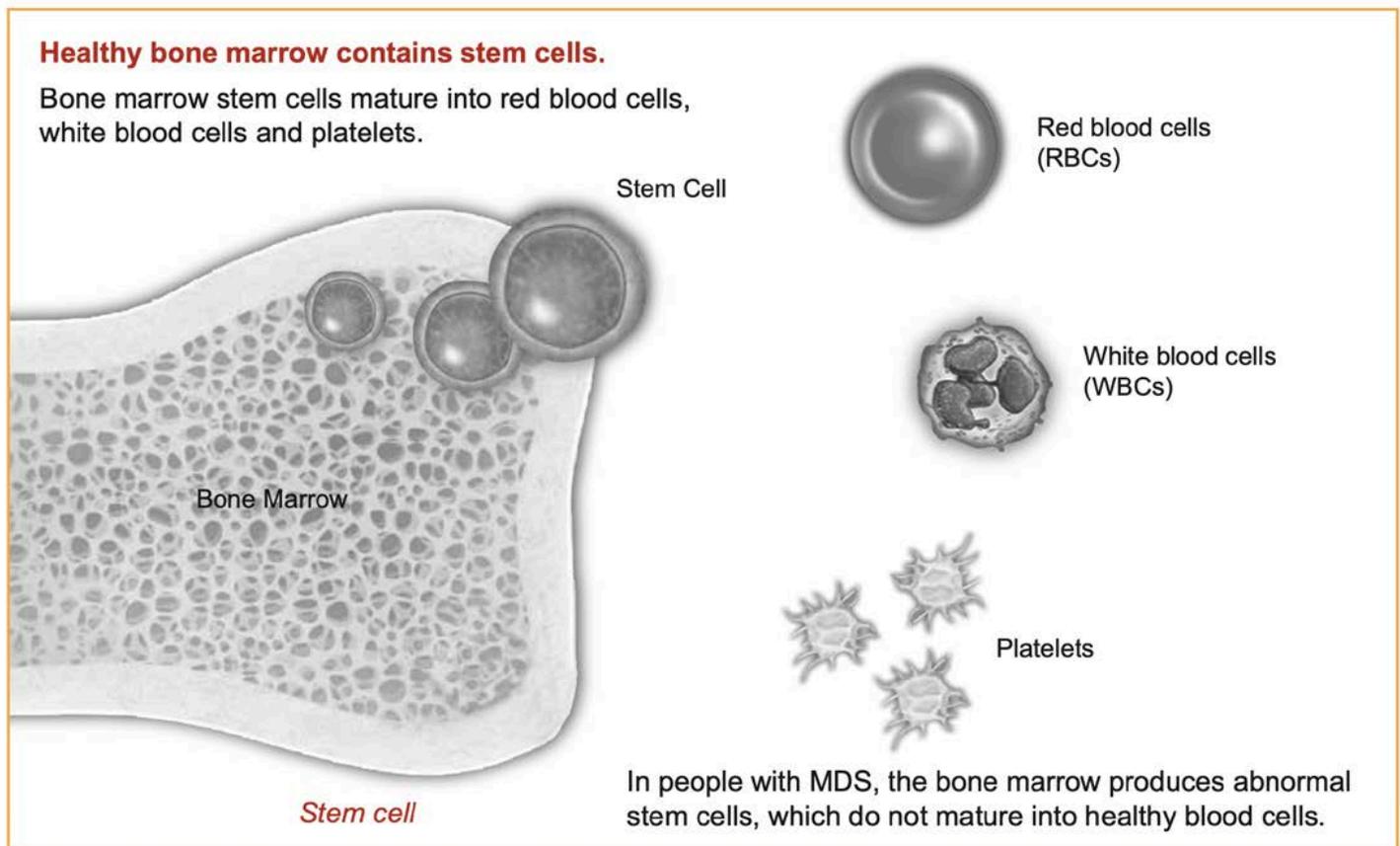
What is MDS?

MDS (myelodysplastic syndromes) is the name for a group of different conditions that affect your bone marrow and blood. Bone marrow is inside your bones and is where all your blood cells are made. MDS stops your bone marrow from making healthy blood cells (red blood cells, white blood cells, and/or platelets). The blood cells are not normal, meaning they are immature, may not be normal in shape/size, and stay inside the marrow instead of going out into the blood.

MDS is a group of diseases, not just one disease. Symptoms vary widely depending on which of your three types of blood cells are affected.

- Red blood cells carry oxygen from your lungs to all the cells in your body.
- White blood cells protect you by attacking germs. There are many different types of white cells to fight different germs.
- Platelets help your blood clot and stop bleeding.

People with MDS always have a low level of at least 1 of the 3 types of blood cells, called a cytopenia. These abnormal cells do not function properly.



Who develops MDS?

Some people are more likely to develop MDS than others.

- Men — MDS is a little more common in men than women
- Age 60 or older — MDS is not common in people under age 60.
- Caucasians — MDS is a little less common among African-Americans, Native Americans, Asians, Inuits and Pacific Islanders.

In the United States, every year more than 20,000 people are diagnosed with MDS.

What causes MDS?

Most of the time, we don't know the exact causes of MDS. These cases are called de novo MDS, meaning there is no explanation for why it developed.

There are a few factors that can increase the risk of getting MDS:

- Having had regular contact with benzene or other harmful chemicals (organic solvents)
- Smoking, or having been a smoker
- Receiving chemotherapy and/or radiation for other diseases can increase the risk of treatment-related MDS, also known as secondary MDS.
- Having another bone marrow failure disorder, such as aplastic anemia
- Having a parent with MDS (although MDS is very rarely passed down through the genes).

Key Facts

- MDS is the name for a group of different conditions that affects blood cells and bone marrow.
- In most cases the cause of MDS is not known.
- MDS stops your body from making healthy red blood cells, white blood cells, and/or platelets. Instead, your body makes blood cells that aren't normal in appearance and can be immature (not fully-grown).



Learn more about living with MDS.

The Aplastic Anemia and MDS International Foundation can help. Contact us to:

- Get support from our Information Specialists
- Connect to other MDS patients through the Peer Support Network
- Find out more about our patient and family conferences at www.aamds.org/conferences
- Call us at (800) 747-2820 or visit www.aamds.org



aamds.org



help@aamds.org



(800) 747-2820