

My Sister's Keeper: Talking Points

Based on the book by Jodi Picoult, "My Sister's Keeper" sheds light on conditions such as leukemia that can be treated by unrelated marrow and umbilical cord blood transplants. In the film, Anna (Abigail Breslin) is conceived as a marrow match for Kate (Sofia Vassilieva), her older sister who has been fighting leukemia since childhood. Kate's parents, Sara (Cameron Diaz) and Brian (Jason Patric) choose to genetically engineer a child to be a genetic match for Kate, as their other child, Jesse, is not. The story follows Anna's fight to earn medical emancipation from her parents, who have relied on her to help keep Anna alive.

Key Points: What this Means for Be The MatchSM and the National Marrow Donor Program[®] (NMDP)

- We actively reach out to movies and shows regarding inaccuracies. We provide information about our Be The Match RegistrySM and offer our medical experts as resources.
- We strongly believe it is important for the public to be accurately informed about marrow and cord blood donation and its potential to help transplant patients.

Additional Points

- The movie My Sister's Keeper highlights the life-saving potential of marrow transplants, as well as the need for unrelated volunteer donors.
- A marrow or cord blood transplant is a potentially life-saving treatment for more than 70 diseases, including leukemia, lymphoma and sickle cell disease.
- Most people think that patients often find a match in their family. Like the movie's character Kate, 70 percent of patients in need of a transplant do not have a matching donor in their family.
- These patients can turn to the NMDP's Be The Match Registry – the largest and most diverse registry of unrelated volunteer marrow donors and donated cord blood units in the world – to find a match.
- Because tissue types are inherited, patients are most likely to match the tissue types of someone who shares their racial or ethnic heritage. Currently, the likelihood of finding at least one potential match on the registry ranges from 60 percent to 88 percent, and depends on a patient's race or ethnicity.
- While many patients do find the life-saving match they need each year, more donors are needed, especially those from racially and ethnically diverse communities.
- Take the first step to help patients in need of transplants and join the Be The Match Registry. Or, tell others to get involved and spread the word online. Learn more at BeTheMatch.org.