



Woman Hopes For Bone Marrow Match To Fight Fatal Illness

Woman's Genetic Heritage Makes Finding Match Difficult

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CONCORD, N.H. -- A Concord woman is hoping to find a bone marrow match as she battles a life-threatening and fast-moving disease.

Nicole Nelson was diagnosed a few months ago with aplastic anemia, a fatal disease that attacks blood cells and can break down the body's ability to defend against illness.

"On average, people this sick live 18 months," she said.



Nelson said the disease robs her of the energy she needs. She doesn't go out anymore unless it's with a mask because a slight cold could prove fatal. She also has to be careful with her 16-month-old daughter, Katie.

"How do you tell a 16-month-old that she can't go to Mom even when you're in the same house?" Nelson said.

Nelson left her job as a nurse, and her life revolves around weekly blood transfusions to stay alive, but she said that's borrowed time.

Her one chance is a bone marrow transplant, but even that has a complication. When she was diagnosed, she was surprised to learn that she's part Native American, making it more difficult to find a viable donor.

"Minorities are badly under represented on the national marrow list," Dr. Robert Johnson said.

Nelson has organized several bone marrow drives to search for a match, and she said just building a larger database might help someone else. She has also reached out to Native American groups for help.

"I just want to return to the life I had been planning," she said.

A bone marrow drive will be held at Elliot Hospital in Manchester on Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.