



THE SEARCH TO FIND A MATCH

a guide for patients and their families



An Extraordinary Gift



Edith (right) had just started her social work career in 2012 when she began to find bruises appearing on her body. Concerned, she went through several rounds of medical examinations before being diagnosed with Myelodysplastic Syndromes (MDS). While she took precautions and was determined to get better, she noticed that her condition was deteriorating and that she was being hospitalised more frequently than before. In 2018, she made the decision to reach out to the BMDP for a bone marrow transplant.

While the BMDP eventually found a match for Edith, she felt a mix of emotions – thankful to have a donor match, yet also concerned for her post-transplant recovery process. However, the thought of a complete stranger willing to undergo multiple rounds of preparation to donate her bone marrow kept Edith going. Because of this experience, she feels extremely thankful to her donor, Shitian (left), for giving her hope and saving her life.

“The greatest gift is hope. When times were tough, it was the hope of having a new lease of life that the donor has given me that helped me push through all the difficulties.”

Edith has recovered well after receiving her transplant. The BMDP team is grateful we can help bring stories such as Edith's to a happy ending by working with local and international partners. We strive to do our best to find a donor for every patient.

We're Here To Help

Once a patient is diagnosed and needs a Bone Marrow Transplant, their medical team will usually look within the immediate family (siblings with the same parents) to see if they have a suitable matching donor. Only 30% of patients have a suitable matched donor among their siblings and so the doctors turn to us at the BMDP.

As the only bone marrow donor register in Singapore, we recruit and locate potential matching donors for patients who needs a bone marrow transplant. Currently, we have about 113,000 volunteer donors on our local register and the number is steadily growing. This allows the doctors to focus on the treatment for the patients while the BMDP gets to work and identify all potentially matching donors locally and globally.

We understand time is crucial for many of our patients, hence we are in daily contact with the doctors and transplant coordinators in the local hospitals. Your BMDP Case Manager will be with you throughout this journey, from the initial search to the delivery of the life-saving stem cell product. If a match is identified overseas, we will ensure that the precious package is either hand-carried or cryo-shipped in a dry shipper from the donor's location to the transplant centre.

Since 1993, the BMDP has helped around 1000 patients in finding a matching donor for their transplant needs. Now we are here to give you the help you need!

Our Global Network

We are a gateway to other bone marrow donor registries around the world, connecting with over 100 other registries in more than 54 countries through World Marrow Donor Association (WMDA). Around the world, more than 39 million people have committed to donate their bone marrow to patients who need a transplant, resulting in a vast resource that we have access to.



The Transplant Journey

The average time from the initial search request to the actual transplant is between 15 to 20 weeks varying between each individual case. As you wait for a donor, the medical team will discuss with you the required treatment as the search is ongoing. While this waiting time can be frustrating, it is also an opportunity to spend time with family and loved ones.



Day 0

Search Request Received by the BMDP

By this time, the attending doctor knows the HLA type (Human Leukocyte Antigen), also known as the tissue type of the patient and this information is forwarded to the BMDP. This is the same information we store in our databases for all volunteer donors.

Week 1

Donor Search & Recommendation

The search process is activated immediately when the BMDP receives the request, and a Case Manager from the **Search & Transplant Services team** will be assigned to oversee the entire case. The Case Manager will firstly recommend the best potential donors for the doctors to review. The transplant physician then makes the final choice of donor and works with the Search & Transplant Services team to proceed with the next step. This service is free of charge.



Week 4-10

Verification Typing of Donor

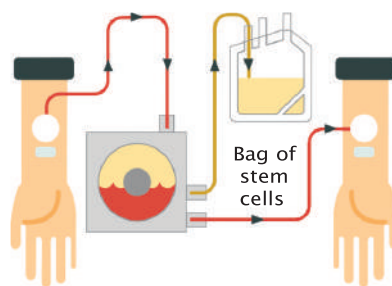
Once a potential donor is identified, Verification Typing (VT) is carried out to double check and make sure that they are in fact the best match for the patient. At the same time, we test the donor for any infectious diseases that may make the donor ineligible to donate or affect the outcome of the transplant.



Week 10-14

Full Medical Evaluation of Donor

The next step is to ensure the donor is medically eligible to donate as they undergo a full medical evaluation, also known as the Donor Workup. If the donor is in Singapore, one of our BMDP Collection Centres will carry out the evaluation. If the donor is overseas, this is carried out on our behalf by the partner registry based there.



Week 14-20

Bone Marrow/Stem Cell Transplant

The Bone Marrow or Peripheral Blood Stem Cell (PBSC) from the donor is collected according to your treatment regimen. The date of the blood stem cell transplant is scheduled based on the date the transplant centre requests, and in accordance with donor and collection centre's availability. In any event, the transplant is carried out as quickly as possible and usually within 48–72 hours off the collection.

BMDP Subsidy Schemes

The BMDP has set up various financial subsidy schemes.

1. Verification Typing (VT) Subsidy Scheme
2. Hematopoietic Progenitor Cells (HPC) procurement subsidy scheme
3. Transplant Cost Subsidy Scheme
4. Post-Transplant Allowance Scheme

Verification Typing (VT) Subsidy Scheme

The VT subsidy supports Singaporeans and Permanent Residents (PR) patients to offset up to 100% of the cost, dependent on the ward class.

Verification Typing Subsidy

The Verification Typing (VT) subsidy was introduced in 2016 to offset the costs needed to carry out a second typing of an identified donor's genetic markers.

New Patients & Relapsed Patients	ONE Pre-approved VT Subsidy	TWO Additional VT Subsidy
Private Hospitals & Class A	20% of VT cost OR such quantum as recommended by the Medical Social Worker	NOT eligible
Class B1	80% of VT cost OR such quantum as recommended by the Medical Social Worker	
Class B2 & C	100% of VT cost	Eligible (This is subjected to recommendation put by MSW and BMDP's approval)

Who may qualify?

Singaporean or Permanent Resident

- New patients
- Relapsed patients who have received a Matched Unrelated Donor transplant in the past 5 years

The BMDP will have the discretion in the administration of funds.

The Bone Marrow Donor Programme
 8 Singapore Drive, #03-02 Novena Specialist Center, Singapore 307470
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Hematopoietic Progenitor Cells (HPC)

Procurement Subsidy Scheme

As there are costs incurred from the full medical evaluation and the collection of stem cells, the BMDP is providing fundings to help alleviate the transplant cost. The HPC Procurement Subsidy Scheme comprises of 3 Tiers:

Tier 1 (T1): HPC Procurement Subsidy – A one lump sum subsidy to offset the HPC procurement cost.

Tier 2 (T2): Additional HPC Procurement Subsidy – In addition to T1, patients are entitled to T2 subsidy, which subsidises up to 65% of the total HPC product cost. T2 subsidy is provided according to Ward Classes, i.e., the same basis that governs patient subsidies in public hospitals in Singapore.

Tier 3 (T3): Supplementary HPC Procurement Subsidy ***Tier 3 (T3)*** – This option is for needy patients staying in subsidized ward (B2 and below) and can cover up to 100% of HPC product cost, subject to recommendations put forth by an accredited Medical Social Worker (MSW) and the BMDP's approval.

With effect from 1st January 2022, the BMDP has extended the HPC procurement subsidy to help more Singaporeans, Permanent Residents and non-citizen spouse/ children of Singaporeans and Permanent Residents. The eligible cell source types are Peripheral Blood Stem Cells (PBSC), Bone Marrow (BM), Donor Lymphocyte Infusion (DLI) and haploidentical/ related donor.

Hematopoietic Progenitor Cell (HPC) Procurement Subsidy Scheme



The Hematopoietic Progenitor Cell (HPC) Procurement Subsidy was introduced in 2019 to support the costs involved in procuring bone marrow or blood stem cells (also known as the HPC product).

		Tier 1: Lump Sum Subsidy	Tier 2: Additional HPC Procurement Subsidy	Tier 3: Supplementary HPC Procurement Subsidy
Singaporean				
Matched Unrelated Donor	Ward Class A	\$3,000	-	-
	Ward Class B1		20% of product cost	-
	Ward Class B2 and C		65% of product cost	Up to 100% of product cost
Haploidentical or Related Donor from Singapore or Overseas ¹	Ward Class A	\$3,000	-	-
	Ward Class B1		-	-
	Ward Class B2 and C		-	Up to \$10,000 including Tier 1
Permanent Resident				
Matched Unrelated Donor	Ward Class A	\$2,000	-	-
	Ward Class B1		15% of product cost	-
	Ward Class B2 and C		60% of product cost	Up to 100% of product cost
Haploidentical or Related Donor from Singapore or Overseas ¹	Ward Class A	\$2,000	-	-
	Ward Class B1		-	-
	Ward Class B2 and C		-	Up to \$10,000 including Tier 1
Non-Citizen Spouse or Children of Singaporean or Permanent Resident				
Matched Unrelated Donor	Ward Class A	-	-	-
	Ward Class B1	-	15% of product cost	-
	Ward Class B2 and C	-	60% of product cost	-

Who may qualify?

- Singaporean or Permanent Resident (PR)
 - New patients
 - Relapsed patients
- Singaporean or PR who requires a Haploidentical/Related Donor Transplant² with no Matched Unrelated Donor available
- Non-citizen Spouse³ or Children of Singaporean or PR

The BMDP will have the discretion in the administration of funds.

¹ Subject to recommendation by an accredited Medical Social Worker

² Haploidentical/Related Donor Transplant: A transplant that involves a half-matched or full-matched donor, typically from a family member

³ Patient must be:

- A legally wedded spouse of Singaporean or PR
- Holding a valid pass, i.e. Employment Pass (EP), S Pass, Work Permit or Long Term Visit Pass

The Bone Marrow Donor Programme

8 Sinaran Drive, #03-02 Novena Specialist Center, Singapore 307470
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Transplant Cost Subsidy Scheme

On 1st January 2020, the BMDP introduced the subsidy scheme to support the costs associated with Matched Unrelated Donor (MUD) Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant (HSCT).

With effect from 1st January 2022, the BMDP is also extending this funding to relapsed patients who have previously utilized the transplant cost subsidy scheme. It is not applicable for patients who received haploidentical/ related transplants. For more information, please refer to the infographic on the following page.

Post-Transplant Allowance Scheme

The BMDP understands that transplant costs make up a significant portion of a patient's bill and patients may also be unable to return to work for the first 12 months post-transplant. The BMDP hopes that with this subsidy in place, patients can be financially supported through their post-transplant expenditures.

With effect from 1st January 2022, the BMDP is also extending this funding to relapsed patients who have previously utilized the post-transplant allowance scheme. It is not applicable for patients who received haploidentical/ related transplants. For more information, please refer to the infographic on the following page.

Patient Transplant Subsidy Schemes



The Patient Transplant Subsidy Schemes support costs associated with Matched Unrelated Donor transplants as well as post-transplant expenses for patients. It hopes to alleviate patients' treatment costs and support them through post-transplant expenditures.

Fund	Funding Quantum	Cap	Condition
Transplant-Related Cost Subsidy	Up to 50% of the total transplant cost	S\$50,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The transplant-related cost subsidy does not cover GST payable.
Post-Transplant Allowance	Up to S\$500/month for a maximum of 12 months	S\$6,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowance shall cease if patient is deceased or resumes employment. Patients who are on other subsistence allowance schemes will not be eligible. The subsidy will be paid out on in 2 tranches (6 months) after a mid-term reassessment is done.

Who may qualify?

Singaporean or Permanent Resident

- New patients
- Relapsed patients who have received a Matched Unrelated Donor transplant in the past 5 years

Eligibility Criteria

- Patient must be a holder of the CHAS card (Orange or Blue) or a Medifund Case
- Recommendation for subsidy must be made by an accredited Medical Social Worker

The BMDP will have the discretion in the administration of funds.



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General Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Do I need to request for searches of overseas registers myself?

No. Very often, well-wishers will tell you that there are larger donor registers in other countries, and you should be searching these to find a match. Please be assured, all donor registries are connected via the same global database, and this is exactly what the BMDP is doing on your behalf from the very outset when we receive a search request with details of your HLA typing. Our job is to provide your medical team with a one-stop service to search for your matching donor and then to transport the product directly to you.

Do you recommend having close family members or friends tested to try and identify a match?

Your doctor would advise if other family members should be tested but the chances of finding a matching donor in this way are very small, so usually they would approach the BMDP to search the volunteer donor registers. Generally, only immediate siblings with the same parents are likely to be a match and they are the first people to be tested. For those who are interested to help other patients in the future, they are welcomed to join our register and be part of our community of volunteer bone marrow donors in Singapore. For those who are not immediately related to the patient, there is only a 1/20,000 chance of being a match.

What happens when there isn't a match for me?

Depending on your diagnosis, the BMDP team may provide your doctors with an alternative treatment plan best suited for your condition.

Additionally, the BMDP will be happy to support you if you are keen on embarking on 'patient appeals' with us where we will appeal for potential donors to join the register to increase the chances for patients with no suitable match to identify a donor.

When do I have to start paying for the BMDP's services?

Providing information is free – so all the preliminary searches and the information we provide from the local and international donor registers will not cost you anything. Costs will be incurred only when your medical team makes a request for the first Verification Test(s). The next payment will be due at the time when the donor is confirmed by your medical team and when we are instructed to carry out the Donor Workup followed by the bone marrow or stem cell collection.

To be continued on the next page.

How much does bone marrow or blood stem cells cost?

The charges are levied in two stages.

The first stage will be at the Verification Typing (VT) stage where the typical cost ranges between S\$700 – S\$3,800.

The second stage will be at the Donor Workup stage where the donor goes for full medical evaluation and for the actual collection of the bone marrow or blood stem cells. This will vary depending on the donor's country of origin. Currently, it ranges between S\$12,400 and S\$68,800. This cost is to cover donor medical and product transport fees. Donors are not paid for their donation.

If the donor is overseas, do I have to pay for them to come to Singapore?

No, you do not have to pay any travel costs for your bone marrow donor. All samples, medical check-ups and the actual bone marrow or blood stem cell procurement will be carried out in the home country of the bone marrow donor. We will then arrange a courier to collect the product and to hand-carry this back to the hospital where the patient is being treated. The final cost includes the airfare and overnight accommodation (if required) for the courier.

Alternatively, the stem cells may be cryopreserved and cryo-shipped to Singapore using a dry shipper.

Can my MediShield or Medisave cover the costs of the transplant?

At this stage, none of the costs incurred to test the unrelated donor and stem cells collection are covered under the government health schemes. Some of the insurance policies may cover these costs and you should check with your provider. To support our patients financially, the BMDP is providing subsidy schemes and patient funding throughout your transplant journey.

How do I make payment to the BMDP?

The hospital would provide you with payment instructions to the BMDP. There are three payment methods, including bank transfer, cheque, or cash. We do not accept credit card payment and do not have Paynow/Paylah account. If there are any queries, you may contact your Case Manager or use the BMDP's general line (pg 18).

To be continued on the next page.

Do I get to meet my donor?

After you have passed the 24-month post-transplant mark, you may request to meet your donor. However, this is dependent on the donor registry's policy and donor's willingness.

This is a very special opportunity for both the donor and recipient to share how their lives have interacted since the transplant.

Prior to the 2-year mark, if you wish to send a card to the donor at any time, we will be very pleased to forward it on your behalf. During this period, you must remain anonymous, hence the card should not contain any information that will allow you to be identified.

Will my information be shared?

Before the start of the search process, you will have to consent to the BMDP's Search & Transplant Services disclosing all of your relevant personal data in order to identify a potential matching bone marrow donor for the purpose of a bone marrow or blood stem cell transplant. All communication and information shared will be strictly confidential between the BMDP's Search & Transplant Services and relevant parties e.g. international registries, donor centres and transplant centres.

Is there any financial assistance scheme available for me?

The BMDP has 3 different subsidy schemes to help you throughout your transplant journey.

1. Verification Typing (VT) subsidy scheme – Refer to page 6.
2. Hematopoietic Progenitor Cells (HPC) Procurement Subsidy Scheme – Refer to pages 7–8.
3. Patient Transplant Subsidy Scheme – Refer to pages 9 – 10.

Refer to the subsidy scheme FAQs on the next page for more information.

Subsidy Schemes - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

VT subsidy

Who is eligible for the VT Subsidy Scheme?

Newly diagnosed or relapsed patients who are Singaporeans or Permanent Residents may be eligible for this scheme.

The amount of subsidy given is dependent on the ward class as seen on the infographics on page 6.

How can I apply for the VT subsidy scheme?

Please approach your medical team for assistance. Your medical team will send your application to the BMDP on your behalf.

HPC procurement subsidy scheme

When was the HPC Procurement Subsidy Scheme launched?

The HPC Procurement Subsidy Scheme was first launched on 1st January 2019. Since then, the BMDP has been expanding its subsidy schemes to help more patients.

Who is eligible for the HPC Procurement Subsidy Scheme?

Patients who are Singaporeans or Permanent Residents seeking treatment in Singapore are eligible for the subsidy scheme. With effect from 1st January 2020, the HPC Procurement Subsidy Scheme was extended to the legally wedded spouse of Singaporeans or Permanent Residents, who are not eligible for government support schemes. The recommendation for subsidy must be made by an accredited Medical Social Worker (MSW) to the BMDP.

With effect from 1st January 2022, the HPC Procurement Subsidy Scheme has been extended to patients who require DLI, relapsed patients, non-citizen children of Singaporean/ Permanent Resident, and Singaporean/Permanent Resident patients who require a Haploidentical/ related donor transplant with no MUD available.

How can I apply for the HPC procurement subsidy scheme?

For Singaporeans or Permanent Residents, please approach your medical team for assistance. Your medical team will send your application to the BMDP on your behalf.

For non-citizen spouse /children of Singaporeans or Permanent Residents, the recommendation for subsidy must be made by an accredited Medical Social Worker to the BMDP.

I am a Singaporean / Permanent Resident seeking treatment in a Private Hospital. Am I eligible for the HPC procurement subsidy scheme?

You will only be eligible for Tier 1 Lump Sum Subsidy

I am a legally wedded spouse of a Singaporean or Permanent Resident seeking treatment in a Private Hospital. Am I entitled to the HPC Procurement Subsidy Scheme?

No, unfortunately only foreigners with a Singaporean or Permanent Resident spouse staying in local public hospital's ward class B1, B2 or C are eligible for Tier 2 HPC Procurement Subsidy.

My child does not have Singapore or Permanent Resident citizenship, however either parent is a Singaporean or PR and my child is seeking treatment in a Private Hospital. Is my child entitled to the HPC Procurement Subsidy Scheme?

No, unfortunately only non-citizen children with a Singaporean or Permanent Resident parents staying in local public hospital's ward class B1, B2 or C are eligible for Tier 2 HPC Procurement Subsidy.

If my child is adopted, is he/she eligible for the HPC procurement scheme?

Yes, adopted children are eligible for the HPC procurement scheme if the child is staying in local public hospital's ward class B1, B2 or C. The Medical Social Worker (MSW) will check the applicant birth/ adopted certificate.

I am eligible for the HPC procurement scheme under haploidentical/ related donor transplant. When and how will I receive the pay-out?

The payor of the final bill will receive the pay-out once the procurement is completed successfully and when the BMDP has received the final bill. The payment will be made following the BMDP's payment cycle once the application is approved.

The pay-out will be transferred via bank transfer to the payor that is reflected in the hospital bill.

Patient Transplant Subsidy Scheme

Who is eligible for the Patient Transplant Subsidy Scheme?

Patients who are Singaporeans or Permanent Residents, holding the CHAS card (Orange or Blue) or under a Medifund case are eligible, subjected to recommendation put forth by an accredited Medical Social Worker (MSW).

With effect from 1st January 2022, the patient transplant subsidy scheme will be extended to relapsed patients who received a MUD transplant (PBSC, BM, DLI only) in the past 5 years. Patients who have previously utilised the patient transplant subsidy scheme will also be eligible for this funding. It is not applicable for patients who received haploidentical/ related transplants.

How can I apply for the Patient Transplant Subsidy Scheme?

The recommendation for the subsidy must be made by an accredited Medical Social Worker (MSW) to the BMDP. Please approach your Medical Social Worker (MSW) for assistance.

Is the Patient Transplant Subsidy Scheme applicable for related donor transplants?

The Patient Transplant Subsidy Scheme is only applicable for Matched Unrelated Donor transplants.

Does the MUD Transplant-Related Cost Subsidy include the funding of GST?

The Transplant-Related Cost Subsidy will be based on 50% of the total transplant cost, capped at \$50,000. It does not cover GST payable.

I am a Singaporean/ Permanent Resident seeking treatment in a Private Hospital. Am I eligible for the Patient Transplant Subsidy Scheme?

You are not eligible for the patient transplant subsidy scheme if you are seeking treatment in Singapore's private hospital. You may approach your medical team for assistance.

Others

Who is funding the HPC Procurement Subsidy Scheme and Patient Transplant Subsidy Scheme?

The funding comes from financial donations from generous members of the public and corporate partners of the BMDP.

What if I am not eligible?

Those who are not eligible to apply for the subsidy scheme/fund may approach their Medical Social Worker (MSW) for alternative options.

May I appeal if I am not eligible?

An appeal will only be valid through requests from your Medical Social Worker (MSW), and it will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

How long does it take to know the outcome of my application?

For applications relating to Tier 1 and Tier 2 HPC Procurement Subsidies, you will be informed of the outcome within 3 working days.

For Tier 3 (Supplementary HPC Procurement Subsidy), it may take slightly longer as you will need to approach an accredited Medical Social Worker (MSW) who will assess your financial status before putting up a recommendation to the BMDP.

Contact Us

8 Sinaran Drive, Novena Specialist Center #03-02
Singapore 307470

Opening Hours:

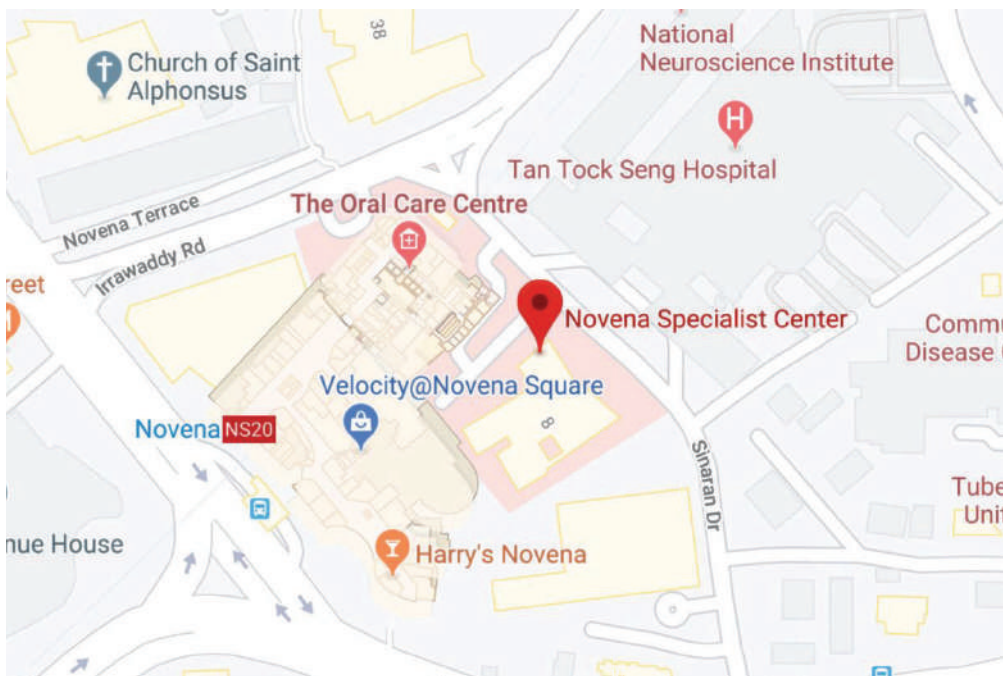
Monday to Friday: 9.00am to 6.00pm

Closed on Saturday, Sunday, and Public Holidays

Tel: (65) 6916 0370

Fax: (65) 6916 0371

Email: patient@bmdp.org | Website: www.bmdp.org



How to find us:

1. Conveniently located beside the Novena MRT Station (NS20).
2. Bus Numbers 21, 56, 57, 131, 166, 851, 980.
Alight at the bus stop outside Velocity @ Novena.



BMDP

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