

# The Multi Organ Transplant Program



UHN

## Living Donor Liver Transplant Program

### Information for Recipients

This pamphlet has information on Living Donor Liver Transplants for recipients waiting for liver transplant at the Toronto General Hospital & the Hospital for Sick Children

### What is Living Donation?

Living Donation happens when someone who is living gives a part of their liver (donor) to someone waiting for a liver transplant (recipient). Living Donation is another way for someone to receive a liver transplant.

### Why should I consider Living Donor liver transplantation?

Infants, children and adults on liver transplant lists in Canada have to wait months to years for a liver transplant using an organ from a donor who has passed away (deceased donor).

Unfortunately while waiting, some of these people may no longer be able to have a transplant or, they may die before a deceased donor liver is available. Our transplant program **STRONGLY** encourages recipients to consider living donation.

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## **Who can be a donor?**

### **Donors:**

- Can be a blood relative, spouse, friend or stranger (anonymous) who shares a compatible blood group with the recipient
- Are between the ages of 18 and 60 years
- Are in good health and a good match
- Are freely willing to donate

**Living donation is not possible for all patients. Some recipients decide that living donation is not the right choice for them because of the risks or other personal or medical reasons. The donor assessment process**

- The Living Donor Liver Transplant Coordinator will provide information about living donation and organize the donor assessment process.
- There are many tests that must be done such as blood tests and CAT scan to find out if someone can be a living donor.
- There are also several meetings the donor will have with the transplant team members (surgeon, doctor, and psychiatrist). This team will help to find out if living donation can be done and to make sure that this is the right choice for the potential donor.
- If the potential donor is found to be in good health and a good match, planning for surgery begins. A date for the surgery will be chosen, and the final details will be discussed with the donor.
- Once the donor has been accepted and a date for surgery scheduled (usually within 2 weeks), most recipients will be placed on hold on the deceased donor waiting list. Sometimes the live donation does not work out. In this case the recipient is put back (re-activated) on the deceased donor waiting list right away.

## **Donor safety and informed consent**

It is important that the donor is kept as safe as possible during Living Donation, and he or she understands all that will happen during the process. At any stage, the donor or transplant team may decide it is in the donor's best interest not to go through with a living liver donation.

## **What will happen during surgery for a Living Donation?**

- The donor surgery lasts about 6 hours.
- The surgeons remove about half of the donor's liver, which is then transplanted into the recipient shortly after wards.
- Within 6 to 12 weeks the liver grows to about 90% of its original size and starts to work normally again.
- The hospital stay for donors is about 5 to 7 days
- Donors can usually return to work after 6 to 12 weeks.

## **What are the risks to the donor?**

As with any major surgery there are risks. Some complications may include:

- Problems with the anaesthetic
- Wound infections
- Pneumonia (lung infection)
- Blood clots in the lungs or legs
- Bleeding
- Bile leakage
- Mental stress
- Other life threatening complications

The transplant team will talk with the donor about all these risks before the surgery.

For more detailed information, please visit our website at

[www.uhn.on.ca/Focus\\_of\\_Care/MOT](http://www.uhn.on.ca/Focus_of_Care/MOT)

Click on "Living Donor Donation"

## **What are the advantages of Living Donor transplantation for a liver transplant recipient?**

Advantages to living donor transplantation include:

- A shorter waiting time. The transplant is done while the recipient is still reasonably well and able to have a faster recovery.
- A lower risk of dying or being disqualified while waiting.

- A very high-quality donor organ. Live donors must be completely healthy in order to donate. Sometimes, we do not have a complete health history of deceased donors or we know that they have had many health issues. Due to the shortage of organs for transplant, we often need to use deceased donor livers that are less than ideal to save someone's life.
- A planned, "elective" operation that the donor and recipient can plan for.
- An opportunity for the donor to "give the gift of life" to a family member or friend.
- Living Donors are urged to send their completed documents to the Living Donor Liver Transplant Office as soon as possible to avoid delays in recipient and donor assessments.

## **What if someone I know wants to be my Living Donor?**

Anyone who wants to be a living donor should contact the Living Donor Liver Transplant Office. This Office will NOT seek out potential donors.

Please have your potential donor go to our website at [www.uhn.on.ca/Focus\\_of\\_Care/MOT](http://www.uhn.on.ca/Focus_of_Care/MOT) and click on "Living Donor Donation".

Potential donors should follow the instructions under "Becoming a Living Donor".

Potential donors can also contact the Living Donor Liver Transplant Office at:

Toronto General Hospital  
585 University Avenue  
12C-1217 NCS  
Toronto, ON M5G 2N2  
**(416) 340-4800 Ext. 6581**

## **Who can I talk to about Living Donation?**

The members of the transplant team invite you to contact us to talk about this treatment option. We would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have about this important opportunity.