

Is a Pancreas or Islet Transplant Right for You?

A decision tool for patients considering islet transplant

Pancreas and islet transplants can be safe and effective ways to treat severe type 1 diabetes, but they are not a good choice for everyone.

The Pancreas Transplant Team at Toronto General Hospital would be happy to meet with you and help decide if a pancreas or islet transplant is right for you.

Read this handout to learn more about:

- Goals for a successful transplant
- What you should know about pancreas and islet transplants
- What to expect before and after transplants
- The Pancreas Transplant Team and your follow-up care



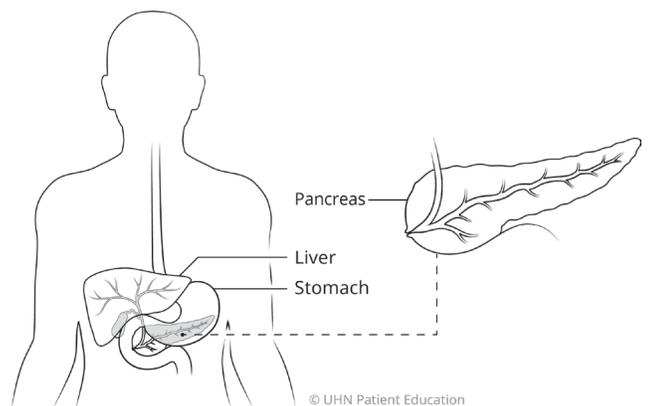
How would a transplant help me?

A transplant may be a good choice if you:

- have severe diabetes that cannot be controlled with usual insulin therapy
- have highs and lows for no clear reason
- do not recognize when your blood sugar is dangerously low (hypoglycemic unawareness)

You may benefit from one of these kinds of transplants:

- A **whole-organ pancreas transplant** – An operation to put a healthy pancreas from a donor into your body.
- An **islet transplant** – A procedure to inject healthy islets from a donor's pancreas into your liver. Islets contain the cells that make insulin.



After a transplant, your new pancreas or islets will begin to make insulin in response to your blood sugar levels. As your blood sugar control improves, you may no longer need daily shots of insulin.

Goals for a successful transplant:

- ✓ No more insulin shots
- ✓ No need to check blood sugars
- ✓ No more life-threatening lows
- ✓ Excellent control of your blood sugar
- ✓ Eating a regular diet
- ✓ Being more active and independent
- ✓ Less chance of diabetic complications

**A transplant can
improve the quality of
your life!**

What should I know about the two kinds of transplants?

	Whole-organ pancreas transplant	Islet transplant
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pancreas transplants have been done for almost 50 years. • This is not an experimental treatment. • At UHN, we do over 40 pancreas transplants each year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Islet transplants are a newer treatment. • At UHN, our first islet transplant was done in 2005. • We are carefully studying the long-term results.
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An operation to place a healthy pancreas from a donor into your body. This takes 3 to 4 hours. • Your new pancreas begins to make insulin right away. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A procedure to inject healthy islet cells from a donor's pancreas into your liver, without major surgery. • Your new islet cells begin to make insulin right away.
Hospital stay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average stay in hospital is 7 to 10 days. 	The average stay in hospital is 7 to 10 days.
Possible risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks related to major surgery. • Risks from taking anti-rejection medications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks related to the procedure. • Risks from taking anti-rejection medications.

What does the Pancreas Transplant Program offer?

- ✓ **Experience.** We are the largest pancreas transplant program in Canada, and a leader in research and teaching world-wide.
- ✓ **Teamwork.** Our team of health professionals is dedicated to helping you through every stage of your transplant.
- ✓ **Excellent care.** You and your family will receive the care, education and support you need for a successful transplant.



What can I expect before and after a transplant?

Before your transplant

Assessment

- The transplant team will do a careful assessment to make sure you would benefit from a transplant. The risks of a transplant may be too high if you have severe heart, liver or kidney disease, cancer, or other health issues.
- You will receive a clear explanation of the benefits and risks before making a final decision about transplant.



Evaluation

- If you decide to go ahead, we will review your medical records and arrange for you to have variety of tests and consultations. Your transplant coordinator will guide you through the evaluation process, which takes about 2 months. We will review the results with you and decide if a transplant is right for you.
- Once approved, you will wait until a transplant become available.

After your transplant

Keeping your transplant working

- Your immune system will try to attack and destroy the new pancreas or islets. This is called rejection. It a normal response - your body's way of protecting itself.
- To help your body accept the transplant, you need to take anti-rejection medications every day for the rest of your life. These medications work by reducing your immune system's response.

- Anti-rejection medications can have serious side effects and may increase your risk of infection and some kinds of cancer.

Taking anti-rejection medications as prescribed by your doctor helps ensure the success of your transplant.

Follow-up care

- You will see the transplant team often and have tests to make sure your transplant and medications are working well.
- At your check-ups in the Pancreas Transplant Clinic, we will discuss your health and check for any signs of infection or rejection. You are welcome to bring a support person with you to your appointments.
- We will work closely with your family doctor and health care specialists to provide your ongoing care.

Deciding to have a transplant is an important personal decision



- For more information and videos, go to www.uhn.ca and search for 'pancreas'
- To contact us, email pancreastransplant@uhn.ca

Your transplant journey begins with a referral to our program. Your doctor or diabetes specialist can **fax a referral to:** 416 340 4340



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