

What You Need to Know about Living Donor Liver Transplant

For liver transplant candidates at the Toronto General Hospital and the Hospital for Sick Children

Read this pamphlet to learn more about:

- What is living donation?
- Who can be a donor?
- What are the risks?
- Who can I talk to?



What is living donation?

Living donation means someone who is living gives part of their liver to someone waiting for a liver transplant.

- The person who gives their liver is called a “donor”.
- The person waiting for a liver transplant is called a “transplant candidate” or “recipient”.

Living donation is another way for someone to get a liver transplant.

Living donation is not always possible. Some recipients decide that living donation is not the right choice for them because of the risks or other personal reasons.

Why should I consider a living donor liver transplant?

A **shorter waiting time**. The transplant is done while the recipient is still reasonably healthy and able to have a faster recovery.

A **lower risk of dying** or **being disqualified** while waiting.

A **high-quality donor organ**. Live donors must be completely healthy to donate. Sometimes, we do not have a complete health history of deceased donors or we know that they have had many health issues. Because there are not enough organs for transplant, we often need to use deceased donor livers that are less than ideal to save someone’s life.

An **elective surgery** the donor and recipient can plan for.

A chance for the donor to “**give the gift of life**” to a family member or friend.

Who can be a donor?

You can be a donor if you are:

- a family member, friend or stranger (anonymous)
- between 16 and 60 years old
- in good health and a good match to the recipient

If your blood type is:	You can RECEIVE a liver from blood type:	You can DONATE to a person with blood type:
O	O	O, A, B, AB
A	A, O	A, AB
B	B, O	B, AB
AB	O, A, B, AB	AB

What if the blood type doesn't match?

In some cases, it is possible for a person who is not a blood type match to donate to a recipient.

If you want to donate a part of your liver to someone but are not a blood type match, you can still follow the instructions to submit your application.

The transplant team will then decide if this is an option for you and your recipient.

What is the donor assessment process?

- The Living Donor Liver Transplant Office provides information about living donation and organizes the donor assessment process.
- Many tests are done such as blood tests, a CT scan and MRI to find out if someone can be a living donor.
- The donor meets with the donor team members (surgeon, doctor, and psychiatrist) several times. The living donor team helps to find out if living donation can be done and makes sure it is the right choice for the potential donor.
- If the potential donor is in good health and a good match, planning for surgery begins. A date for the surgery is chosen, and the living donor team talks with the donor about final details.
- Once the donor accepts and a date for surgery is scheduled (usually within 2 weeks), most recipients are 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.

How do we keep the donor safe?

The living donor team will work with the donor to make sure every step of the process is explained fully and understood.

At any time, the donor or transplant team may decide it is safer not to do the living donor liver transplant.

What happens 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 soon after.
- 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?

Like any major surgery there is a chance that some complications may happen, including:

- Problems with the anesthetic
- 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.

Important: To make sure there are no delays with recipient and donor assessments, living donors need to send their completed documents and a document showing their blood type to the Living Donor Liver Transplant Office as soon as possible.

What if someone I know wants to be my living donor?

Please have your potential donor visit our website:

www.UHNtransplant.ca

To apply, donors should follow the instructions under the Living Donor Program page.

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

Toronto General Hospital

585 University Avenue

Peter Munk Building – 12C-1217

Toronto, ON M5G 2N2

Phone: 416 340 4800 extension 6581

Email: livingdonorliver@uhn.ca

Visit www.uhnpatienteducation.ca for more health information.

Contact us to provide feedback or request this brochure in a different format, such as large print or electronic formats: pfep@uhn.ca

© 2019 University Health Network. All rights reserved.

Use this material for your information only. It does not replace advice from your doctor or other health care professional. Do not use this information for diagnosis or treatment. Ask your health care provider for advice about a specific medical condition. You may print 1 copy of this brochure for non-commercial and personal use only.

Form: D-5702 | Author: Living Donor Transplant Program | Revised: 05/2019