



How Living Liver Donation Can Get You Back on Life's Path



Living Liver Transplant

A liver transplant is the treatment of choice for individuals experiencing liver failure. Many patients currently on the wait list for a deceased donor liver have a long and difficult road ahead. Living donation offers a shorter pathway to transplantation.

Living liver donation is when a live person gives a portion of their liver to someone with end-stage liver disease.

Living liver donation provides better long-term outcomes and quicker recovery than deceased organ transplants – for example, the 5-year survival rate for those who receive a living donor transplant is 90%, compared to 80% for those who receive a deceased donor organ. Living donor transplant also allows for a scheduled surgery, giving the donor and recipient, as well as their families, time to prepare.

Although living donor liver transplant is proven to have better outcomes, it is not available in many transplant centres in Canada, US, and Europe due to the high degree of specialization required. Many patients currently on the deceased donor transplant wait list do not know there is another path to better health. Sadly, some will die waiting.

In Asia, the Middle East and other places where living donation is relatively common, criteria often require living donors to be related to their recipient. At UHN, living donors do not have to be blood relatives - they can be family, friends, co-workers, community members, or strangers. If a person is in good health, between the ages of 16 and 60, and freely willing to donate, they can be considered as a possible living liver donor.

Since 2000 we have performed nearly 900 living liver donor transplants with excellent outcomes for recipients and living donors.

There are more than **5,600** Canadians living with a liver transplant. They are the lucky ones.

1 in 5 people with end-stage liver disease will die waiting for a deceased donor organ this year.

The Living Liver Transplant Program at UHN

UHN's Toronto General Hospital is ranked one of the top ten hospitals in the world. We are world leaders in liver transplantation, research, innovation, and care. Our liver transplant program is unique in many ways:

1. We transplant patients at earlier stages of liver disease because the benefits outweigh the risks.
2. We have a very experienced team so we can transplant patients who are considered "too sick."
3. We have clinical trials that provide access to novel treatments that may be unavailable elsewhere.
4. We have expertise in dealing with complicated anatomy. Individuals who have been turned down for a transplant or for living donation by other programs may be accepted here.
5. We offer paired liver exchange to find the best match for patients with living donors who are incompatible due to liver size, blood type, or other factors.
6. Our living donor program is one of the largest in North America, known for its safety and high quality of care.
7. Our patients, living donors, and transplant team come from across Canada and around the world. No matter where you are from, you feel you belong here.

How Do I Get Referred to UHN?

If you have advanced liver disease and would like to be assessed at UHN, please request your health care provider to complete a referral to the UHN Liver Transplant Clinic. Visit bit.ly/UHNLiverTxReferral for more information.

International and Out of Province Patients

UHN accepts out-of-province and international living organ donors and transplant patients in compliance with Canadian law and international guidelines.

You must be referred to the UHN liver transplant program, and deemed eligible for transplant, before a living donor candidate can begin the assessment process. Living donor testing is usually completed at Toronto General Hospital. In some cases, UHN may also be able to partner with a local health provider to arrange testing.

If you are a Canadian resident, and you have a potential living donor who lives outside of Ontario or outside of Canada, your provincial health plan will cover most costs associated with medical tests, surgery and time in hospital. Some out-of-pocket expenses, such as flights and accommodation, may also be covered by provincial reimbursement programs.

International living donors may apply for a temporary resident visa for intending organ donors to enter Canada. International patients are encouraged to contact the UHN International Patient Program, IPP@uhn.ca.

How Do I Become a Living Liver Donor?

Anyone who is healthy, understands the risks and benefits, and wants to donate freely is eligible to be a living liver donor at UHN.

The first steps to becoming a living liver donor are:

- Read the living liver donor manual to understand what is required.
- Attend our education sessions to ensure living donation is right for you.
- Fill out the living donor health history form and submit it to the Living Liver Donor Program along with proof of your blood type (a letter or blood test from your family doctor, or a blood donor card).

The Living Donor Coordinator will contact you within 2 business days to review your application. If there is a backlog it may take slightly longer. If another donor is currently being assessed for the same recipient, you will receive an email confirming that your application has been received.

If you pass the initial screening interview, you will be invited to begin the comprehensive donor assessment process to rule out concerns that may pose a risk for living donation. This process can take 4 – 8 weeks.

Donor safety is our number one priority. We will not rush the donor assessment process even if the recipient is very sick. The process is confidential. You can withdraw at any time.

How Do I Find a Living Liver Donor?

UHN does not solicit living donors but we do provide resources and free education sessions that may be helpful to those exploring living donation.






Both the Donor Champion Education Session and Information Session for Potential Living Liver Donors can help you get started.

Our Living Donor Outreach Coordinator is also available to answer questions about living donation outside of these education sessions. To book a call, email livingorgandonation@uhn.ca

Social media is becoming increasingly common within the transplant community. Find out more: [Using Social Media to Find a Living Organ Donor](#).

For More Information

Contact the Centre for Living Organ Donation

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