

# Talking With Your Doctor About Living-Donor Liver Transplantation

At UPMC, we believe living-donor liver transplants are a first-line treatment, not a last resort for patients who need a liver transplant. A living-donor liver transplant can minimize the time a patient spends on the waiting list and help improve the organ shortage problem by reducing the number of people waiting for deceased donor organs.

Many patients, health care workers, and physicians are unaware that living-liver transplant is an effective solution with many benefits. It's important to share information with your doctor and other health care providers if you think you might be a candidate.

**This information can be given to your doctor to talk through living-donor liver transplant to see if the option is right for you. It also provides referral information for your doctor.**

## **Facts About Liver Transplantation and Living Donation:**

- Approximately 14,000 people are on the liver transplant waiting list in the U.S. For many, the wait for a liver transplant may take years because there are not enough deceased-donor livers available. **Every year, an estimated 2,800 people die** waiting for a liver transplant.
- Living donation helps address this problem by providing a life-saving alternative for patients. During a living-donor liver transplant, a portion of liver from a healthy person is removed and transplanted into the recipient. **Both the donor and recipient's liver regenerates**, or regrows, to its original size within months of the surgery. Major complications are uncommon for the donor, and in the vast majority of cases, they go on to live normal, healthy lives. We have a **stringent protocol for evaluating living donors** and review the risks and benefits with them.
- While many people think that a living-donor liver transplant is an experimental procedure, **it has been performed for over 2 decades**, and hundreds of procedures are performed in this country every year.

Many physicians believe it's something to consider only when other treatments have failed, but actually **the best time to be evaluated is early**, before a patient's disease has progressed too far. One of the benefits of living donation is that the patient is in a healthier state before transplant, which contributes to a better outcome.

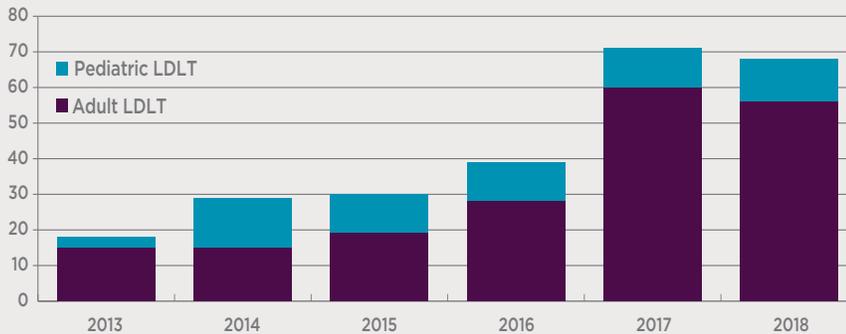
- Patients can be listed at more than one transplant center. **Listing at more than one transplant center gives patients more options** and can increase their chances of receiving a liver transplant sooner. If the local transplant center does not perform living-donor liver transplants, patients can dual list at a center that does.

## **Benefits of Living Donation:**

- Living donor transplants can occur sooner than with an organ from a deceased donor. This decreases significantly the time spent on the liver transplant waiting list and **reduces the risk of the liver disease worsening**.
- Living-liver donors and transplant recipients can **schedule surgery** at a time that works for both people.
- Because the donor's liver is healthy and functioning right until the transplant, recipients of a living donor transplant typically have **improved long-term outcomes and quicker recovery times**.

## Talking With Your Doctor About Living Donation

### Our Volumes



### Survival Rates



### UPMC Liver Transplant Program - Pittsburgh, PA

The UPMC Liver Transplant Program in Pittsburgh, Pa., is one of the oldest and largest in the United States and leads the nation in living-donor liver transplants. Expertise is critically important for this type of surgery. And research shows that high-volume centers have better outcomes for complex surgical procedures like transplants.

### Liver Transplant Criteria

At the UPMC Liver Transplant Program, we consider each person referred to our program. We're committed to providing liver transplant services to anyone who will benefit, including those who are high-risk. We even extend our criteria and protocols to patients who may not be considered for transplant at other centers, including those with low Model For End-Stage Liver Disease (MELD) scores or complex conditions.

A candidate for liver transplant may suffer from any of these liver conditions:

- Hepatitis C
- Hepatitis B
- Alcoholic liver disease
- Non-alcoholic steato-hepatitis or fatty liver disease

- Primary liver cancers
- Primary biliary cirrhosis
- Autoimmune hepatitis
- Primary sclerosing cholangitis
- Acute liver disease from toxins, including Acetaminophen/Tylenol
- Alpha 1 Antitrypsin deficiency
- A failed prior liver transplant
- Polycystic disease
- Hemochromatosis
- Veno-occlusive disease
- Wilson's disease

### Finding a Donor

The UPMC Living Donor Champion Program is a valuable educational tool that can help support patients and their families in identifying a suitable living donor. Learn more by visiting [UPMC.com/LivingDonorChampion](http://UPMC.com/LivingDonorChampion).

## Talking With Your Doctor About Living Donation

After you talk to your doctor about living donation, the next step is for your doctor to refer you to the UPMC Liver Transplant Program.

### How Your Doctor Makes a Referral

To allow our dedicated team to provide a comprehensive assessments and determine if a living-donor liver transplant is an option, early referral is key.

The UPMC living-donor transplant team pursues a collaborative approach with referring physicians and is available for consults 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**If your doctor has a question or would like to make a referral: Call 1-844-UPMC-LIVER or e-mail [transplant@upmc.edu](mailto:transplant@upmc.edu).**

Medical records can be mailed or faxed to:

### UPMC Transplant Services

UPMC Montefiore, 7 South  
3459 Fifth Ave.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Fax: 412-864-5846

### Information Needed for Referral:

When your doctor makes a referral to UPMC, the following information needs to be included to expedite the referral process:

#### Demographic information

- Patient name
- Patient date of birth
- Patient address
- Patient phone number
- Emergency contact information (including emergency contact's home and cell phone numbers)

#### Insurance information

- Name of subscriber
- Subscriber's relationship to patient
- Identification number
- Group number

#### Clinical summary

- Most recent outpatient records
- Discharge summaries from prior hospitalizations
- All operative notes, including surgically placed lines
- Radiologic studies
- Recent laboratory reports
- If your patient is currently hospitalized, current hospital records
- Reports from previous transplant evaluations, including letters of acceptance or decline, if applicable
- Referring physician information
- Referring physician name
- Referring physician phone and fax numbers
- Primary care physician name

### Visit Our Website

To learn more about our program and see resources we offer to help our patients identify a living donor, visit [www.UPMC.com/LiverReferral](http://www.UPMC.com/LiverReferral).