

Living Donor Liver Transplantation

Information for patients



Leeds Liver
Unit

This leaflet provides information to potential donors, families and recipients waiting for liver transplant at St James's University Hospital, Leeds.

Why Consider Living Donor Liver Transplantation?

Adults on liver transplant lists in the United Kingdom can currently wait up to a year or more for a liver transplant. Unfortunately, about 15 to 20% of patients waiting for transplants will die before a liver becomes available from a deceased donor.

Our transplant programme encourages patients and their families to consider the opportunity of living donor liver transplant. This is an important option to help meet this organ shortage.

Who can be a Donor?

Donors should be:

- A blood relative, spouse or friend who shares a compatible blood group with the patient
- Between the ages of 18 and 60 years in good health and a suitable size
- Freely willing to donate

Living donation is not possible for all patients. Some patients and their families/ partners decide that living donation is not the right choice for them because of the risks or for other personal or medical reasons.

The Work-up Process

The Living Liver Donor Transplant Co-ordinator will provide information about living donation and organise your work-up process.

In order to assess if someone can be a living donor, there are many tests that must be done. For example, blood tests, chest x-ray, MRI scan, CT scan.

There are also several important meetings with members of the living donor team (surgeon, physician, social worker, psychiatrist) who will help to determine the suitability of the potential donor for living donation. As part of the process an independent assessor will ensure that necessary legal requirements are met, as an additional safeguard.

If the potential donor is identified as a good candidate, planning for surgery begins. A date for the surgery will be chosen, final details and discussions will be arranged.

It is important to know that at any stage, the donor has the right to withdraw the offer or the living donor team may decide it is not appropriate.

What does the operation involve?

The donor surgery lasts about 4 hours. The surgeons remove between 20-60% of the donor's liver, which depends on the size of the recipient. Within 6-12 weeks the liver regenerates (grows) to approximately 90% of its original size and function returns to normal.

The hospital stay is, on average 4 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. For this procedure, these include:

- Problems with the anaesthetic, wound infections, pneumonia and blood clots in the lungs or legs
- Bleeding
- Bile leakage
- Psychological stress
- Death (1:200)

These risks will be fully explained when donors meet with the living donor team.

What are the Advantages of Living Donor Transplantation?

Advantages to living donation include:

- Shorter waiting time - the transplant can be done before the recipient's health deteriorates further
- High-quality donor organ
- Planned, "elective" operation
- Opportunity for the donor to "give the gift of life" to a family member or friend

Other Considerations

The members of the living donor team invite you to contact us to discuss this treatment option.

We would be pleased to send you additional information and answer any questions you may have about this important opportunity.

Please call our Living Donor Transplant Co-ordinator at:

- Live Liver Donor Team
Liver Transplant Co-ordinators Office
Level 3 Bexley Wing
Beckett Street, Leeds
LS9 7TF
- Telephone: 0113 20 66913
- email: leedsth-tr.livedonor@nhs.net
- Web: www.leedsth.nhs.uk and then search for "Live Donor Liver Transplant Program"
- twitter: [@liveliverdonor](https://twitter.com/liveliverdonor)
- facebook: Live Liver Donor Transplant at Leeds



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Developed by: Julie Jeffery & Katie McGoochan - Liver Transplant Co-ordinator's

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