LIVER TRANSPLANT INFORMATION
Pre-Transplant
Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I obtain a referral to the Transplant Institute?
   Your gastroenterologist, primary care physician, or other medical provider can contact the
   Transplant Office by calling 412-359-6800 and choosing option 5 for liver. Patients may also use this
   number to inquire about the program.

2. Does the Transplant Institute accept my insurance or Medicare for a liver transplant?
   We are a Medicare-approved program and accept many different insurance plans. Our financial
   coordinators will confirm your insurance coverage before your initial evaluation.

3. What happens at the initial visit?
   Before your initial visit, you will be contacted by the transplant team to schedule a variety of tests
   to assess your medical condition. At your evaluation appointment, you will meet several members
   of the transplant team to review the test results and discuss your medical history. These team
   members include a nurse coordinator, a transplant surgeon, a hepatologist (liver doctor), a
   psychiatrist, a social worker and a financial coordinator. The transplant process will also be
   reviewed in great detail to answer any questions you and your family may have.

4. When am I placed on the donor waiting list?
   After you have met the team and undergone all of the recommended testing, your case will be
   reviewed by our liver transplant team. If the team determines that a liver transplant is the best
   option for you, the nurse coordinator will contact you to discuss the donor list process.

5. What happens while I’m waiting for a donor liver to become available?
   A nurse coordinator will remain in close contact with you throughout the waiting period. You will
   also continue to follow up with your regular gastroenterologist. Your position on the list, also
   known as your MELD score, will be updated regularly, based on blood work and testing. We will
   periodically check for liver tumors by having you complete imaging studies, such as ultrasound,
   computed tomography (CT) scans, or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). As your MELD score rises
   over time, the likelihood of receiving a liver becomes greater. Our team is available at all times to
   guide you through this stressful waiting period.

6. How will I know when a donor liver becomes available?
   If a possible liver becomes available for you, you will be contacted by a transplant nurse
   coordinator to report to the hospital. Final testing will be done on the donor liver to determine
   whether to proceed with the transplant.
Preparation for Transplant
Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What should I do before I go to the hospital for the transplant?**
   You will receive specific pre-operative instruction when the transplant coordinator notifies you about the transplant.

2. **What should I pack and not pack?**
   You will be in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) for several days, so there is no need to pack anything for when you initially arrive at the hospital for your transplant. Your family can bring in what you need as your health improves. Please leave your valuables at home.

3. **How do I get to the Transplant Institute?**
   The Transplant Institute is at Allegheny General Hospital. ([link to directions])

4. **Where should I park?**
   You may park in the James Street garage at Allegheny General Hospital.

5. **Where should I go to be admitted into the hospital?**
   If a bed is immediately available, the transplant coordinator may ask you to proceed directly to the assigned room in the hospital. Otherwise, you may wait in the Admissions Department where you will be contacted as soon as the bed becomes available.

6. **What kind of hospital room will I have?**
   As a liver transplant patient, you will be admitted to the ICU after surgery until you are ready to proceed to a regular room. Every effort is made to provide transplant patients with a private room.

7. **Will I have a television and telephone in my room?**
   All of our patients’ rooms are equipped with televisions and telephones.

8. **What hotels are near the Transplant Institute for my family and friends?**
   We have relationships with several hotels in the area that offer discounted rates and shuttle services to Allegheny General Hospital. Our transplant social worker can supply you with an up-to-date list of these hotels.

9. **Do you provide special services for people with disabilities?**
   Yes, we provide a number of special services for hospitalized patients with disabilities. During the admission procedure, please let our transplant coordinator know of any special needs that you have to make you as comfortable as possible while you are here.
The Transplant
Frequently Asked Questions

1. What happens during the transplant process?
   When an organ becomes available, the transplant coordinator will call you and direct you to the appropriate unit. You will have some basic testing completed and monitoring lines inserted. When the appropriate time comes, you will be taken to the operating room for the transplant.

2. How long does the surgery last?
   A typical liver transplant lasts about five hours or more.

3. What happens to me after surgery?
   Patients are typically admitted to the Surgical ICU after surgery until the physicians feel that you can be transferred to a regular room. You will be monitored closely by the medical team and given transplant medications. We will provide you with extensive education about these medications and about how to care for your new liver.

4. How long will I stay in the hospital?
   Your length of stay in the hospital is determined by your health status before the transplant and the course of your recovery. Typically, transplant patients remain in the hospital for 10 to 14 days.

5. What are my days like while I’m in the hospital?
   You will be visited daily by several members of the transplant team to assess your recovery, order any necessary testing, and to educate you on the transplant process. Our physical therapists will work with you if needed to assist in your recovery. You will be allowed to resume a normal diet and move around the unit as determined by your doctors.

Post-Transplant
Frequently Asked Questions

1. How will I feel when I get home?
   Depending on your condition at the time of discharge, you may be admitted temporarily to a physical rehabilitation facility before going home. You may feel fatigued from the recovery and may have abdominal pain from your incision. We will monitor you for any side effects from the new medications and evaluate you regularly at the Transplant Institute.

2. What lifestyle modifications will I have to make?
   While you are still in the hospital, we will tell you about changes you will need to make to your diet and lifestyle. When you are first released from the hospital, you will be required to have frequent blood work so your care team may adjust the levels of your medications and check the status of your liver. You will visit the Transplant Institute frequently at first upon release, and eventually you will only need yearly appointments.

3. Will I need a special routine when I return home?
   You will have to strictly adhere to your new medication regimen. If you ever have any questions about your medication, our transplant coordinator will be readily available to you.

4. Should I take any precautions during my recovery?
   Transplant patients should be careful of infection and rejection of the transplanted liver. You will have to take medication to prevent rejection for the rest of your life. You should also take care to prevent infection. We recommend exceptional hand washing avoiding others who are sick.
5. **When may I return to work?**
   You will be allowed to return to work when your transplant physicians determine that you are able. Heavy lifting should be strictly avoided during the recovery period to reduce the risk of hernia.