

# Living Donor Liver Transplant

*Offering hope to those who need it*



Vanderbilt Transplant Center

## What is a living donor liver transplant?

It's when a person who's alive gives part of their liver to someone who needs a liver transplant. When someone gets a new liver this way, it means they don't have to wait for a deceased organ donor. It can help them get the help they need before they get too sick. Vanderbilt Transplant Center offers this option to patients who need new livers and have found a matching living donor.

## Should I donate part of my liver?

You're the only one who can answer this question. It's completely up to you, and always voluntary. You can change your mind at any time. Donating is a serious decision. It's your job to learn all about it before you decide. We're here to answer all your questions.

## If I'm interested in being a living donor what do I do?

*First, all these things must be true*

- You're 18 to 60 years old.
- You're in good physical and mental health.
- You have a BMI of 35 or less.
- You do not and will not engage in active ongoing alcohol, drug, or substance abuse.
- You have no history of:
  - liver disease, including cirrhosis and hepatitis
  - major diseases of the lungs, kidney, or heart
  - active, malignant cancer
  - HIV.
- Someone you know has asked you to be their donor. They are also a patient at Vanderbilt who's either on our transplant waitlist or currently being evaluated for liver transplant.

*Second, fill out our online donor registration application*

Go to **[VanderbiltHealth.com/transplant/54376](https://VanderbiltHealth.com/transplant/54376)** to apply. You must include the name of the Vanderbilt patient you want to donate to. We'll review your application and decide if you're a *potential* donor.

*If you're approved as a potential donor, we'll get in touch with you*

- You'll need to have blood tests done to find out your blood type.
- You'll now be required to learn about the entire donor process, including the donor evaluation, which is how we find out if you can be a donor. Going through evaluation is an intense process. Before you can agree to do it, you need to know what will happen, as well as the risks involved. Learning about what you agree to is a process called **informed consent**.

## The donor evaluation

- We'll schedule you for evaluation **only** if you've learned all about it and we have your signed, informed consent to move forward.
- The evaluation will take 2 full days. It will let us know if you meet the requirements to be a donor.
- You'll have a great deal of medical, physical, and psychological tests, as well as labwork done.
- You'll meet many members of the transplant team at this time.
- The surgeon will talk with you in more detail about the risks and complications of surgery and being a donor.

*After the evaluation*

The transplant team will review all your test results. Together, we'll decide if you can be a donor. We'll contact you with the results. If you're approved, we'll then work with you and your recipient to schedule surgery for a time that works for both of you.

*The risks of evaluation*

During evaluation, you may find out about medical problems you didn't know you had. You need to be prepared for this possibility.

## Before surgery

You'll meet with the transplant surgeon once again to talk about any additional questions you have. You'll also carefully read and sign all the paperwork and consent forms that are required for surgery.

## The day of surgery and your hospital stay

You'll be admitted to Vanderbilt University Medical Center. During surgery and after, the surgical transplant team will care for you. You may also get support from the transplant social worker, pharmacists, and the living-donor advocate.

During your stay, we'll teach you about all the things you need to know and do as you recover. This includes teaching you about your medicines, your nutrition needs, and how to care for yourself and your incision after you leave the hospital.

## After surgery: Your long-term care agreements

We'll follow your health closely for 2 years after surgery. You'll have scheduled follow-up care, labwork, and treatments during this time. You're expected to comply with this. It's something you must agree to if you choose to be a donor. You also agree to have regular preventive care with your primary care provider for the rest of your life.

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