

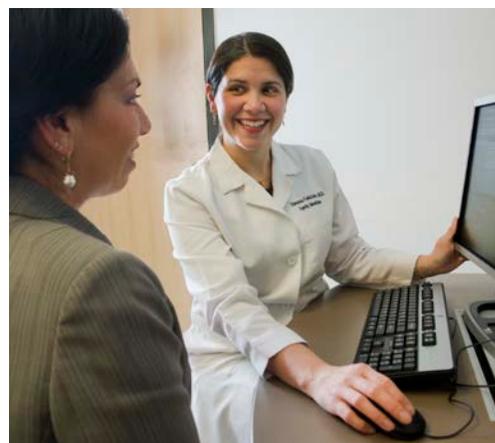
Your Liver Transplant Team

Working together

Your Transplant Team is the key to a successful transplant. The team is made up of:

- You, the transplant recipient
- Your caregiver
- Your family and friends
- A group of dedicated healthcare professionals

This section of *Your Liver Transplant Guide* briefly describes each of these team members and what they do.



As the transplant recipient, you play a very active and vital role in your care.

You, the Recipient

As the transplant recipient, you have a very active role. We urge you to:

Keep the Lines of Communication Open

- Ask questions about your care and treatment.
- Share personal information that may affect your care.
- Keep track of your health changes and daily progress in a notebook and share it with your healthcare providers

Take Responsibility for Meeting Your Healthcare Needs

- Closely follow all instructions you receive from your Transplant Team.
- Learn about all your medicines: their names, what they do, why you take them, when you take them, and the dose you take.
- Do as much as you can for yourself and stay as independent as you can.

Caregiver

Your caregiver(s) will have a very active role in your care, both before and after your transplant surgery. Having a strong support system is vital for a successful transplant.

Be sure to choose a caregiver who will provide the support you need. This person will need to help you with tasks such as:

- Making arrangements for transportation to and from the clinic
- Coming with you to your clinic appointments
- Providing emotional support
- Providing physical care
- Helping you take your medicines
- Recording the medicines you take
- Noting changes in your condition
- Getting medical help, if needed
- Reporting your symptoms to healthcare providers
- Gathering information about your condition
- Serving as a communication link with your family and friends

Transplant Hepatologist

The *transplant hepatologist* is a doctor who specializes in liver diseases and in managing the liver transplant process. A transplant hepatologist will:

- Be your main contact person on our transplant program
- Give you a complete health exam to see if transplant is a good option for you
- Partner with your local primary healthcare providers to assure the continuity of your care
- Plan your follow-up care before your liver transplant
- Be active in your care after your transplant surgery and for the rest of your life

Transplant Residents and Fellows

Residents and fellows are integral members of your Transplant Team:

- A **resident** is a doctor who has finished medical school and is now receiving advanced training in a specific type of medicine or surgery.
- A **fellow** is a doctor who has finished medical school and residency, and is now receiving extra training in a special area such as transplant surgery.

While you are in the hospital, these doctors will:

- Visit you every day
- Examine you
- Write specific care orders for you
- Assist the Transplant Team with your general care

While you are in the hospital, you will have access to a resident or fellow at any time of the day or night.

Physician Assistant

A physician assistant (PA) is licensed to practice medicine, with supervision from your doctors. The PAs will:

- Examine you
- Write prescriptions for you
- Help manage your care during your hospital stay

Clinical Transplant Nurse Coordinator

Your clinical transplant nurse coordinator is a registered nurse (RN) who coordinates all events in your transplant journey. You will meet this nurse during your first visit to UWMC.

Your transplant nurse coordinator will be your main contact person during your transplant evaluation and after you leave the hospital. During your hospital stay, your main contact person will be the inpatient Physician Assistants.

Your transplant nurse coordinator:

- Will teach you about transplants
- Will convey your questions and concerns to your Transplant Team both during your evaluation before transplant and after you leave the hospital
- Will help set up and manage your follow-up care
- Maintains your listing on the liver transplant list

Transplant Social Worker

During your evaluation for transplant, the transplant social worker will:

- Take a full *psychosocial history* of you and your caregivers. This includes asking you questions about your mental, physical, and emotional health. This information helps the social worker create a care plan that will work best for you.

- Help you create a solid care plan.
- If needed, offer recommendations to help you stop using alcohol.
- Answer your questions and concerns about your stay in the hospital and your care after discharge.

You can also meet with your social worker at any point during your transplant journey. Please see the “Social Work Services” section.

Scheduling Coordinators

Your scheduling coordinators work with your transplant nurse coordinator. They will:

- Schedule all appointments for your evaluation, follow-up, and care after transplant
- Help coordinate your appointments in different UWMC clinics
- Answer your questions about how to prepare for tests
- Verify your insurance for your appointments
- Help with scheduling changes as needed

Transplant Financial Counselor

Your financial counselor will provide special help with your questions about paying for your transplant care. This counselor will work closely with the scheduling coordinator to solve issues related to your insurance coverage and other payment plans.

Transplant Dietitian

Your transplant dietitian is an expert in nutrition who will work with you during the entire transplant process. There are several dietitians on your Transplant Team:

- During your evaluation, an **outpatient dietitian** will assess your nutritional status and give you recommendations to help you be in the best possible health for your surgery. This dietitian will also work with you at clinic visits after your surgery to track your nutritional status.
- During your hospital stay, an **inpatient dietitian** will make sure that you receive the right nutrition. This dietitian will also talk with you about how your nutritional needs will change after the transplant and will give you tips on how to change your diet to meet those needs.
- A dietitian will also work with your caregivers to make sure they understand your dietary needs and are prepared to support them.

These dietitians will work together to make sure you receive the best possible nutrition care.

Transplant Pharmacist

During your evaluation, transplant pharmacists will teach you about the medicines you will be taking after your transplant. While you are in the hospital, transplant pharmacists will meet with your Transplant Team and help monitor your drug therapy. When you are ready to leave the hospital, they will teach you about your medicines.

Transplant pharmacists will work closely with you and your transplant coordinator to make sure your new medicines will not interact with the medicines you are already taking. You will also see the pharmacists in your follow-up clinic visits after you leave the hospital so that they can review your medicines and answer your questions.

Transplant Surgeon

The transplant surgeon has received special training in surgery and caring for transplant patients. The transplant surgeon will:

- Meet with you and your caregivers during the evaluation process
- Visit you every day during your hospital stay after surgery
- Review the results of your lab tests and X-rays
- Check your incisions to make sure you are healing well
- Assess your progress as you get ready to leave the hospital after surgery

As part of the Transplant Team, a transplant surgeon may also order tests or treatments, or may change your medicines. Ask your transplant surgeon any questions you have about your surgery, your incisions, or other issues related to your care.

Critical Care Nurses

After your transplant, you may be admitted to the critical care unit (also called the Intensive Care Unit, or ICU) in the 5-East wing of the hospital. Critical care nurses are specially trained nurses who will:

- Monitor your condition as you recover from anesthesia
- Monitor how well your new organ is working
- Take care of your incisions and drains
- Help you increase your activity
- Help you recover

Transplant Unit Primary Nurses

A transplant unit nurse will be your primary nurse during your hospital stay in the 4-Southeast wing of the hospital.

While you are in the hospital, your primary nurse will:

- Provide and direct your nursing care
- Share your needs and concerns with other members of your Transplant Team
- Involve you and your family in decisions about your care
- Teach you and your family about your healthcare needs
- Coordinate your discharge so that your healthcare needs are met after you leave the hospital

Physical Therapy

Physical therapy is part of your recovery after your transplant. Your Transplant Team will prescribe physical therapy when you are ready.

Most transplant patients begin physical therapy when they transfer to the transplant unit on 4-Southeast. Sometimes, patients see a physical therapist while they are still in the critical care unit on 5-East.

At your first visit, the therapist will assess your strength, endurance, and flexibility. Together, you will plan a therapy program to meet your needs.

You will do physical therapy at least once a day unless other important procedures are scheduled. Your physical therapist will also create a home care exercise program for you, based on your specific needs. Your physical therapist may also partner with an occupational therapist.

Occupational Therapy

After your transplant, your doctor may prescribe occupational therapy. This type of therapy will help you safely do your daily activities. The occupational therapist will create a plan of activities to increase your strength, endurance, and independence during and after your hospital stay. These activities may include:

- Self-care
- Moving into or out of a car, bathtub, or bed
- Home safety strategies
- Ways to conserve your energy
- Ways to make tasks easier to do
- A home exercise program

Your occupational therapist may also recommend certain home health equipment for you to use during your recovery.

Your therapy program will be designed to meet your specific needs. It will help increase your independence in your activities of daily living as you heal after transplant.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Transplant Services:
206.598.8882