

LIVER TRANSPLANT PATIENT INFORMATION

WHAT TO EXPECT

When referred to UAB Medicine for a liver transplant, you will be scheduled for 2-4 days of outpatient testing. If you are hospitalized and too ill to be seen as an outpatient, your local doctor can discuss your case with UAB physicians. This doctor-to-doctor communication may lead to your transfer to UAB Hospital for an inpatient evaluation. Whether performed on an inpatient or outpatient basis, some or all of the following tests may be scheduled as part of your evaluation. Other tests may be needed later as a follow-up to the initial results.

The Liver Transplant Clinic is located in The Kirklin Clinic of UAB Hospital at 2000 6th Avenue South in the medical center district on the University of Alabama at Birmingham campus.

PARKING

For appointments in the clinic, please park in The Kirklin Clinic of UAB Hospital parking deck at 2100 6th Avenue South. If you need a wheelchair or other assistance, please stop at the 2nd floor entrance of the parking deck, and our escort personnel can help you get to your appointment. Valet parking and high-top van access is available in the circular driveway in front of The Kirklin Clinic of UAB Hospital, not within the parking deck.

POSSIBLE EVALUATION TESTS

BLOOD AND URINE TESTS will rule out certain infectious diseases and will measure:

- Various blood counts, such as white and red cells and platelets
- Blood type
- Blood chemistries
- Kidney and liver functions
- The presence of viruses and/or viral antibodies. Exposure to some common viruses will not prohibit liver transplantation, but these tests are important for management after transplantation. In some cases, vaccination prior to transplant may be recommended.
- Levels of various drugs, nicotine, and alcohol

CHEST X-RAYS determine the health of your lungs.

IMAGING SCANS MAY INCLUDE:

- **Ultrasound** and/or **CT (CAT) scan** to show the size and shape of the liver and major blood vessels. They may also detect liver lesions or tumors.
- **MRI (magnetic resonance imaging)** provides similar images but may be useful when more information is needed or if the patient can't tolerate dyes used in radiology.

ELECTROCARDIOGRAM (EKG) shows heart rhythm and may reveal past damage.

ECHOCARDIOGRAM (ECHO) shows the function of heart valves, measures pressure in the pulmonary artery, and determines the sizes of the heart chambers.

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PULMONARY FUNCTION TEST (PFT) requires breathing forcefully into a tube to measure how well the lungs are working and the ability to carry oxygen.

ARTERIAL BLOOD GASES (ABG) requires that a small syringe of blood be drawn from the artery in your wrist.

ADDITIONAL HEART TESTING may be required if you have a history of heart or vascular disease or if there are significant risk factors for hidden or silent heart disease.

DISCUSSIONS WITH THE TEAM

INTERVIEWS with a transplant social worker, a neuropsychologist, and transplant nurse coordinator help determine how you and your family cope with stress. You will learn more about financial costs and resources available to transplant recipients.

CONSULTATIONS with a liver transplant surgeon and a hepatologist (liver specialist) allow the physicians to talk with you about your medical history, discuss the liver transplantation process, and answer any questions you and your family may have.

These tests and discussions help the UAB Transplant Team determine if:

- A transplant is right for you at this time.
- There are any problems, such as closed blood vessels, that could complicate your surgery.
- You are physically able to undergo transplant surgery.
- There are emotional, psychological, or family issues that should be addressed.

These tests and interviews you'll undergo will help the UAB transplant team determine the best way to maximize your chances of achieving the best results in treating your liver disease. The transplant team meets weekly to review patients' evaluation results. You will be notified of the committee's recommendations approximately 7-10 days after you complete your evaluation, and you also will receive a letter containing this information.