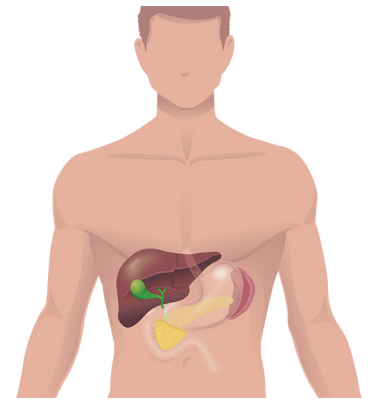


# Living liver donation



You're considering donating part of your liver to someone who is sick. This fact sheet explains who can do this and the different steps in this process.

## What is a living liver donation?

Being a living liver donor means donating part of your liver to another person while you're still alive. This other person has a diseased liver and is waiting to receive a new liver.

This organ donation must be as safe as possible for both the donor and the recipient.

That's why a health assessment of the donor is necessary.

Sometimes a donor candidate is not accepted, even when there is a strong desire to donate.



## What are the benefits of living donation?

Living donation can save the life of a person waiting for a liver. It is a selfless act. Many donors say they feel a great sense of satisfaction after doing it.

The person you donate to may be:

- a family member
- someone close to you
- a stranger

**For the recipient,** receiving a liver from a living person rather than a deceased donor has several benefits:

- a shorter waiting time for the transplant (this can prevent the recipient's condition from worsening and help them recover more quickly)
- a better quality liver, because it comes from a healthy donor
- a planned operation

This donation also benefits everyone else waiting for a liver, as the recipient is taken off the wait list.

## Are there risks for the donor?

Yes, liver donation can be risky. This is why the health care team does a full assessment of the donor's health.

The main risks are those related to the operation (e.g., infection, bleeding, blood clots). The care team will explain these to you, and you'll be able to ask questions. You can also consult the health information sheet [\*Se faire retirer une partie du foie - L'hépatectomie\*](#) (French only).

The donor may also feel some anxiety about the outcome of the transplant.

## Who can make such a donation?

Any person in good health can be assessed to find out whether they can donate part of their liver. The basic criteria are:

- age between 18 and 60 years
- good physical and mental health
- blood type compatible with the recipient's
- not being under any pressure to donate
- having a good support network (family, friends, etc.)
- no HIV
- no history of cancer
- no diabetes

If you think you meet these criteria, **you might be a potential donor.**



## How do they assess whether I can make a living liver donation?

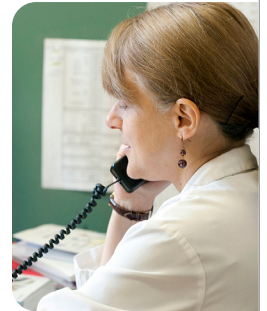
A nurse does an initial assessment with you by phone.

The nurse will ask you several questions about your health and situation.

If you meet the criteria and decide to proceed, you'll undergo a complete health assessment. This includes medical tests such as:

- blood tests
- imaging tests to see the condition of your liver and its size

You'll meet with several professionals (surgeon, nurse, psychiatrist, social worker) to complete the assessment.



### ATTENTION

During the assessment, you'll need to:

- go to all your tests and appointments at the CHUM
- not travel to areas at risk for Zika, a virus transmitted by mosquitoes

If the assessment is positive, the operation can be scheduled.

## How long does the assessment take?

It generally takes 1 to 2 months. In urgent cases, it can be done more quickly.

Please note: There may be a delay between the end of the assessment and the actual operation. If the delay is more than 30 days, some tests may need to be redone to keep your file up to date.

If you change your mind, you have the right to stop the process at any time, even on the day of the operation. There is no obligation to donate, and your safety is the first priority.

## What happens in the operation?

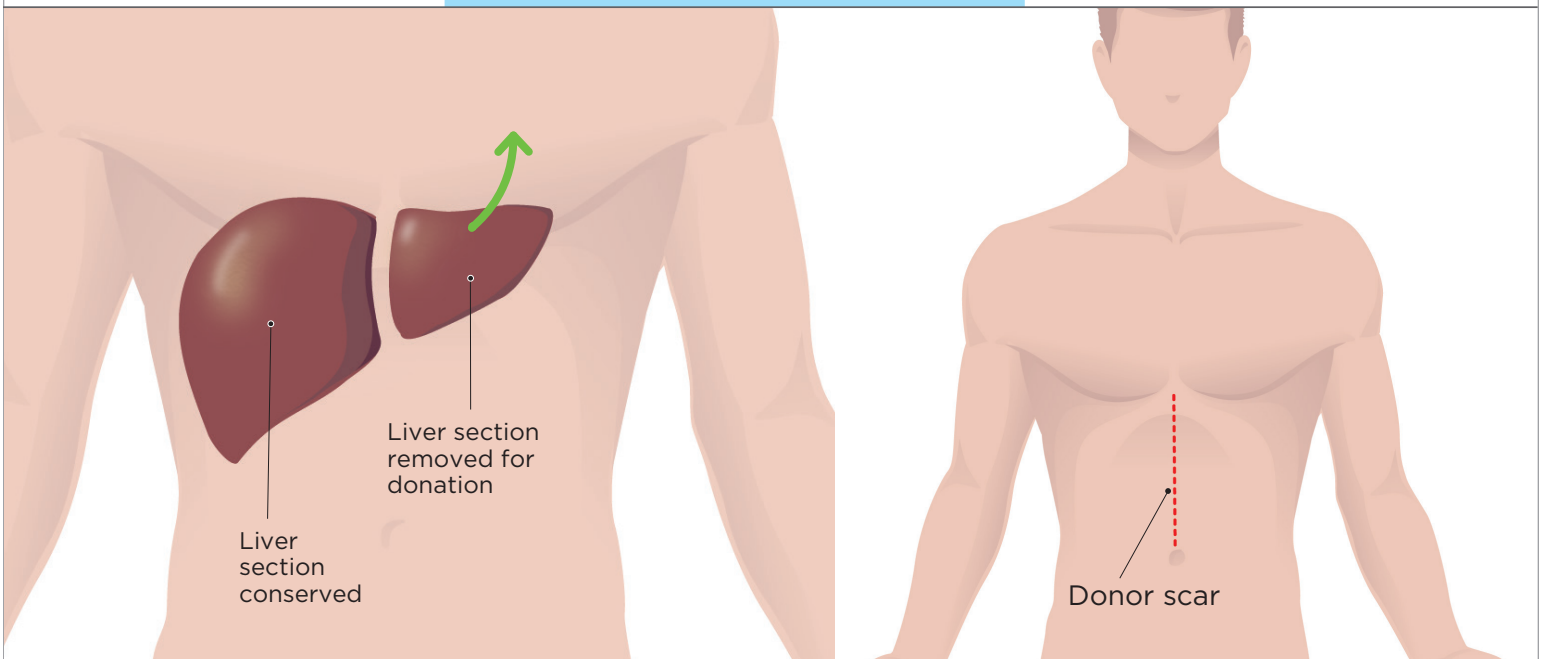
The part of the liver to be donated is removed. This operation is called a hepatectomy.

The procedure takes about 6 hours under general anesthesia (you'll be asleep). The donor and the recipient are operated on at the same time. This ensures the best chances of success, as the organ that has just been removed is immediately transplanted.

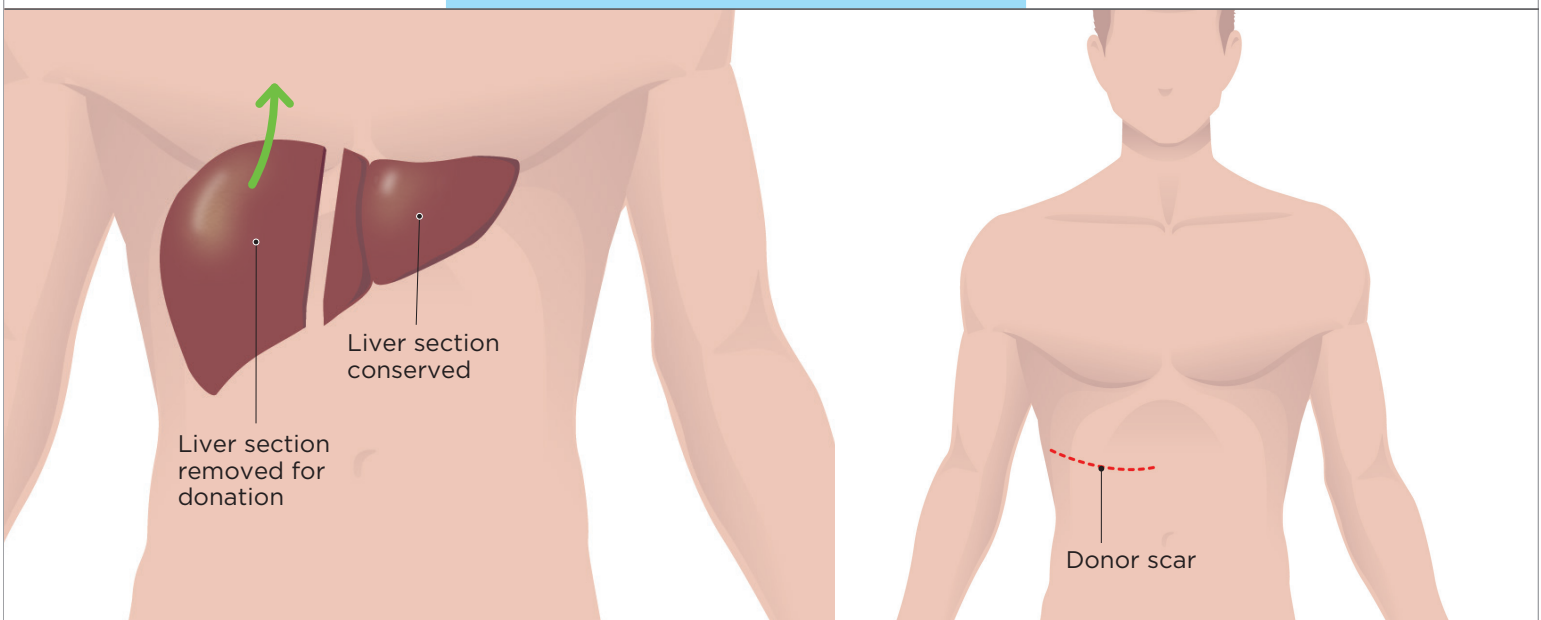
For a donation to a child, about 30% of your liver may be removed. For an adult donation, it would be 60% to 70%.

In some cases, the scarring may be different from the illustrations below. Ask your health care team for more information.

### For a donation to a child



### For a donation to an adult





### How long will I stay in the hospital?

You'll be admitted the morning of the operation. Afterwards, you'll stay 24 hours in the intensive care unit and then 3 to 5 days in the surgical unit.

### How long is the convalescence?

It usually takes 2 to 3 months. Within the first week after the operation, the liver starts to regenerate. It will go back to 90% of its normal size. This happens over 6 to 8 weeks.

### What is the follow-up after the operation?

The health care team will make sure everything goes well for you. The first follow-up appointment is 2 weeks after the operation, then 3 months, 6 months, and every year after the donation.

#### Financial support

A provincial financial assistance program for living donors helps cover some travel, accommodation, parking, and meal expenses as well as lost income. It applies from the beginning of the assessment tests all the way through the convalescence. See the Useful Resources section.

### Who can I contact for questions?

The decision to donate part of your liver is a major one. If you (or someone you know) have any questions about this, please don't hesitate to contact the nurse responsible for living liver donors:

> 514 890-8000, ext. 35338



#### USEFUL RESOURCES

Transplant Québec:

See the Reimbursement Program for Living Donors. You can find the documents to complete on the organization's website.

> 1 855 744-9231

> [transplantquebec.ca/en](http://transplantquebec.ca/en)

Click on Donor → Living Organ Donation

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.



You can also find them on our website

[chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante](http://chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante)



#### Questions


*The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.*

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal [chumontreal.qc.ca](http://chumontreal.qc.ca)

