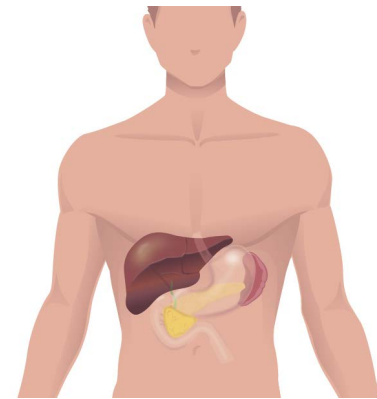


Waiting for a liver transplant

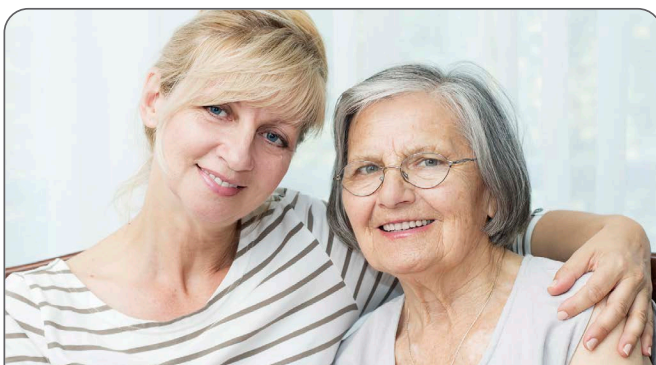
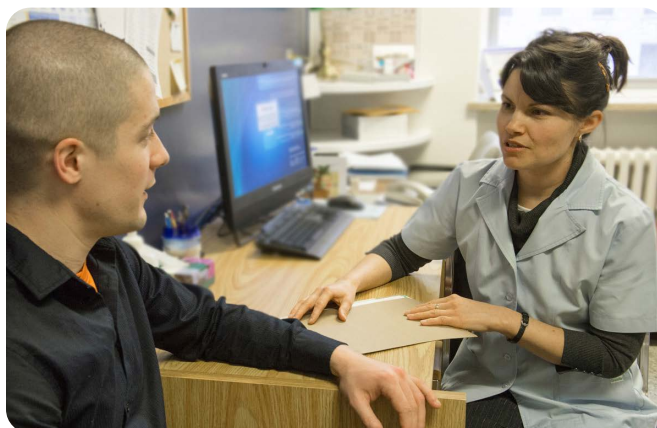


You're eligible for a liver transplant. This fact sheet explains the process of waiting for your operation.

How long will I have to wait before receiving the transplant?

It's **impossible** to know.

The wait could last a few weeks or years. It depends on the severity of your disease compared to those of others who also need a transplant. Transplant Québec manages the unified list of everyone waiting for an organ. That organization assigns available livers to the most urgent cases.



Living donor

The wait time can be shorter if a loved one gives you part of their liver. See the fact sheet [Living liver donation](#). That person would need to contact the transplant team directly to express their intent to become a donor.

How can I find out my position on the wait list?

The ranking on the wait list is determined by a score, called MELD, given to each patient.

Your MELD score is calculated based on the results of your blood tests. It provides a reliable indication of the severity of your disease. It's sometimes adjusted in the case of specific diseases, such as childhood diseases.

Your follow-up nurse will tell you where you rank on the wait list when registering you on it.

Can my position on the list change?

Yes, it can change depending on the results of follow-up tests and blood tests done while you wait for the transplant.

> If you have liver failure:

You will need to have regular blood tests to monitor changes in your liver's condition and capacities.

> If you have a liver cancer called hepatocellular carcinoma:

You'll need to have an imaging exam every three months. This could be:

- a CT scan
- a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan



These exams are done to see how many tumours are in your liver and monitor any changes. To do a transplant, there must not be too many cancer cells. You'll be told when to come for these tests.

You can call your health care team to find out your position on the wait list.

Can people be taken off the wait list?

You could be **temporarily** removed from the wait list for the following reasons:

- Your health condition improves
- Your health status worsens and you're not well enough to receive a transplant
- You have an infection
- You haven't had the required follow-up tests
- You're leaving for a stay outside of Québec
- You ask to be removed from the list

In rare cases, **permanent** removal from the wait list occurs when:

- You no longer want to receive a transplant
- Your health status has improved to the point where a transplant is no longer needed
- Your health status has gotten worse and a transplant would now be too risky

How will I find out that a liver is available for me?

If a compatible liver is available and your name is next on the wait list, you'll be called immediately.

This call can come at any time of day or night. Always keep your cell phone with you and leave it on at all times.

If you can't be reached, the liver **will be offered to another person on the wait list.**

Inform your care team if you change phone number or address. Also let them know whenever you're going to be outside of Quebec.

As soon as you get the call, you must go to the hospital. For this reason, always keep a suitcase ready for a stay of about 10 days. If you can't get there quickly, you must say so at the time of the call.



Unless otherwise indicated when you get the call, don't eat or drink before going to the hospital. You may have to undergo tests when you arrive that require you to be fasting.

Ask someone close to you to drive you to the hospital. Emotions and stress at a time like this increase the risk of an accident.

When you get to the hospital, you'll undergo several exams to check your health status before the transplant. You'll be able to eat after those exams.

How can I stay in good health while waiting?

It's advisable to:

- Take medications for your other health problems as prescribed.
- Stop drinking alcohol and taking drugs to avoid further damage to your liver.
- Quit smoking to improve healing after the transplant. There are programs that can help, such as the Quit to Win Challenge.
- Walk and do as much physical activity as you can at your own pace and within your limits. This will help maintain your muscle tone. Doing moderate to vigorous physical activity at least 3 to 5 times a week improves the quality of life after a transplant.
- Eat a healthy, high-protein diet, unless otherwise advised by your nutritionist. This helps prevent muscle loss (muscle wasting).

See the fact sheet [Eating a protein-rich diet](#).

Add as little salt as possible to your food to reduce your sodium intake.

Avoid using salt at the table and when cooking. Also avoid processed foods that are too salty. Follow the nutritionist's advice. This will help reduce the accumulation of fluid in your abdomen (ascites) or in the tissues of your leg (edema).



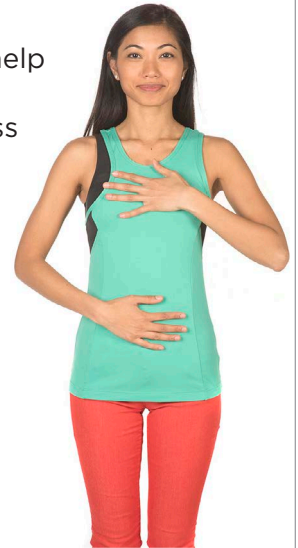
How can I manage my stress?

Waiting for a transplant can be very stressful, both for you and your family.

There are several tips that can help you manage stress. See the fact sheet [Relaxation for better stress management](#). You can also use techniques that have helped you in the past.

Accept help from your loved ones. For example, let them prepare a meal for you, run errands for you, etc.

If you continue to be worried, not sleeping or eating, talk to your pre-transplant nurse. Your care team needs to know how you're feeling during this wait. If necessary, they will refer you for treatment or support.



You can meet with a patient partner who has had a liver transplant. In listening to you and telling you about their own experiences, such a person can be very supportive. Ask your health care team to arrange a meeting with one of them.

Who can I contact for help or to ask questions?

Call your follow-up nurse, Monday through Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

For any questions related to a health concern outside of these hours, you can call a nurse at the CHUM Health Patient CHUM Hotline (ligne Santé Patient).

> **514 890-8086**

This service is available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. When you call, be sure to have your health insurance card on hand.

If you have psychological or social issues, your follow-up nurse can assess your needs and direct you to the right resource.

Contact your CLSC to find out what services are available in your area if you:

- have financial needs
- require transportation to get to your appointments or to the hospital after the transplant call



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



USEFUL RESOURCES

Transplant Québec:
> transplantquebec.ca/en

The Maison des greffés can offer accommodation to your loved ones if you have a letter confirming your stay in hospital for a transplant. You'll be able to obtain this letter from your care team.
> maisondesgreffes.com/en/

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



Questions



Resource people and contacts

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal
chumontreal.qc.ca