

# I Need a Liver Transplant. *What's Next?*

Your first step may be the most important.

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Being told you need a liver transplant is life-changing news for you and your family. You will face important and sometimes overwhelming questions and decisions. The treatment choices you make can influence your transplant results and quality of life.

## **One of your biggest decisions is choosing your transplant center.**

You should take time to discuss your options with your physician, family and potential caregivers. But with so many choices to make, where should you start?

## **Questions You Should Ask**

The following are questions you should ask any hospital or transplant center you are considering for your care:

- **How many LIVER transplants do you perform each year?**

This is an important question, because experience really does matter. The more liver transplants a center performs, the better it tends to be at these highly specialized surgeries. This can mean better care for each patient. To review this information for specific transplant centers, it may be helpful to visit [SRTR.org](https://www.srtr.org). That's the website of the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients, an organization that supports research and continuing evaluation of people who have received organ transplants.

- **How long does it take to receive a liver at your center? How many people are currently on your transplant waiting list?**

Getting your new liver as soon as possible will help improve your quality of life and reduce the risk of additional complications from a failing liver. You can find information about wait times and waiting list on [SRTR.org](https://www.srtr.org).

- **What are the survival rates for people who receive liver transplants at your hospital?**

Compare liver patient survival rates between hospitals you are considering and against national averages. Transplant centers can provide you with reports on the outcomes (the results) of the transplant surgeries they have done, detailing the survival rates for their liver transplant patients. This information is also available at [SRTR.org](https://www.srtr.org).

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- **What before- and after-transplant support does your center provide?**

Some hospitals offer programs to help you return to work, lower stress, manage finances, understand medications and a variety of other services. The center should be able to provide you with information on these important services.

- **Is the transplant center convenient to my home? Can I quickly and easily get to the center when I'm called to receive a new liver?**

When a liver becomes available, every minute counts, and it is important to be able to arrive at the transplant center as soon as possible. Ask the center how close you must stay to be available for your transplant and what transportation options are available.

- **Is it convenient for my caregivers to stay near the transplant center?**

Your transplant team will require follow-up appointments for weeks, months and sometimes years after the transplant. It is important that you have a comfortable, affordable place to recover after your surgery. You will need around-the-clock care for days or weeks after the transplant, so the center you choose should also be convenient for your caregiver. During your hospital stay, family and friends may want to visit you, so check whether your hospital recommends any nearby hotels with affordable room rates.

- **Do you accept my health insurance?**

Knowing what your plan covers and what it doesn't can help you avoid unexpected out-of-pocket costs. If you have questions about your insurance coverage at a particular hospital, ask to speak with a financial coordinator or billing counselor.

- **Does your hospital have a special unit for transplant patients and families?**

Some hospitals have specially designated areas to accommodate you. These transplant centers are typically able to provide all of the resources transplant patients need, close at hand. The nursing staff and other care team members are specially trained to manage the unique needs of transplant patients.

- **Do you accept patients listed at another transplant center?**

If you can be listed on the transplant wait list for more than one hospital, your wait time may be shorter. Check to see if the center will work with other centers so that patients can be dual-listed.

## About the Vanderbilt Transplant Center

At Vanderbilt, we offer the most thorough care for you and your family — before, during and after your surgery.

Vanderbilt has performed more liver transplants than anyone else in Tennessee — over 2,000 since the program's inception in 1991.

Because we transplant so many livers, our expertise runs deep. Our specialists' knowledge surpasses almost any other team's in the country, so we offer you the best possible care.

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The results speak for themselves: Our patients recover faster, and better, than liver transplant patients at nearly any other hospital in the country. The Vanderbilt Transplant Center has given thousands of people a second chance at an active, longer life.

## Vanderbilt Transplant Center

VanderbiltTransplant.com

(615) 410-9983

## Where to Find More Information

The Vanderbilt Transplant Center website offers information and links to additional resources to help you and your family as you make choices about transplant care: [VanderbiltTransplant.com](http://VanderbiltTransplant.com)

- **Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN)**

This organization maintains the only national patient waiting list and features the most comprehensive transplant data available: [optn.transplant.hrsa.gov](http://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov)

- **Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients**

This organization provides statistical analyses related to solid organ allocation and transplantation in support of the Department of Health and Human Services and its agents in their oversight of the national transplantation system: [SRTR.org](http://SRTR.org)

- **United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS)**

This organization unites the transplant community to save lives through organ transplantation: [unos.org](http://unos.org)

- **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

This site offers statistics, materials and resources about organ donation and transplant centers: [organdonor.gov](http://organdonor.gov)

- **Tennessee Donor Services**

This site is the nonprofit, federally designated transplant donor network serving nearly 5.5 million people in Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia: [tds.dcids.org](http://tds.dcids.org)

- **Donate Life America**

This organization supports and encourages organ donation: [donatelife.net](http://donatelife.net)