

Living Liver Donation

Living donation provides an opportunity for a recipient to receive a portion of a liver from a live person.

What are the Advantages of Living Donation vs. Non-living Donation?

Living donor liver transplants have many advantages. The primary advantage of living donation is that the transplant can be done earlier, before the recipient becomes too sick. The healthier a person is before surgery, the better the outcome. Recipients of living donor transplants have excellent long-term outcomes after transplant. Living donor transplant can also allow families to schedule and prepare in advance for the surgery and recovery.

What are the Qualifications to be a Living Donor?

To be a living donor, a person must be physically fit, in good general health, and free from diabetes, cancer, and heart disease to be a living donor. People considered for living liver donation at the University of Michigan must be between the ages of 21 and 55. The living donor must first undergo a blood test to determine blood type compatibility with the recipient. If compatible, the donor undergoes a medical history review and a complete physical and psychosocial examination. The decision to become a living donor is a voluntary one, and the donor may change his or her mind at any time during the process. The donor's decision and reasons are kept confidential.

What are the Costs Related to Living Donation?

Medical costs associated with the evaluating a living donor are covered by Michigan Medicine. The donor will not have any costs associated with the evaluation, surgical procedure, follow-up or any related complications. Living donors may be eligible for financial assistance through the National Living Donor Assistance Program. This is a federally funded program that provides funding to cover travel, lodging and meal costs associated with the donor evaluation, surgery and follow up.

In 2024, Governor Whitmer signed House Bill 4361, sponsored by State Representative Felicia Brabec (D-Pittsfield Township), creating a tax credit to alleviate the financial burden on organ donors. The measure covers costs like lost wages and medical bills, promoting increased organ donation and saving lives across Michigan. Learn more at BridgeMI.com/michigan-health-watch/give-organ-get-10000-michigan-tax-credit. Please talk to your tax accountant about it.

Are People Entitled to Disability Pay if They Donate?

If a person's job provides disability insurance coverage, that person will most likely be entitled to disability pay. A potential donor should check with his/her employer.

Will Donating a Liver Prevent Someone From Becoming Pregnant or Fathering a Child?

No. Living donation does not have any impact on fertility.

Should a Potential Donor Stop Smoking Before the Surgery?

Yes. A person must stop smoking to be a donor, even light smokers. Smokers have an increased risk of complications with any surgery.

Should a Potential Donor Stop Drinking Alcohol?

Yes. To be a living donor, drinking alcohol must stop before the surgery. For those with a heavy history of alcohol use, it is very important to tell the doctors. Living donors should not return to drinking alcohol until six months after surgery.

Should a Potential Donor Stop Taking Medication(s) Before the Evaluation or the Surgery?

Do not stop any prescription medication unless advised to do so by a doctor. Be sure to tell the transplant doctor and team about all current prescription and over-the-counter medications.

Do Potential Donors Need Someone to Accompany Them During Their Donor Evaluation?

Yes, please bring a care partner for evaluation appointments. A care partner is the person chosen for support through the process of becoming a living liver donor. This person will also be responsible for helping to care for the donor after surgery.

How Long Will it Take to Recover?

A donor is typically hospitalized for five to seven days after the surgery. The recovery time varies from four to 12 weeks depending on the type of work and activity of the donor.

Living Donor Eligibility

- Age 21-55
- No major medical problems
- No significant mental illness or substance abuse
- Anatomic considerations of donor and recipient
- BMI <35 – Donors who are interested in a structured weight-loss program to facilitate donation may be offered consultation with a registered dietitian

How do Living Donors Contact the Transplant Center?

Contact the University of Michigan Transplant Center at (800) 333-9013 or txp-donors@med.umich.edu to connect with a living donor coordinator, or go online to submit your contact information at www.UofMHealth.org/transplant.



Living Liver Donor Facts

Compatibility

All living liver donors must have a compatible blood type with the intended recipient.

Resources for Living Liver Donation

- www.YouTube.com/watch?v=itIBtkQACiI
Living Donation in Liver Transplantation video by Dr. Benjamin Samstein
(8 minutes, 14 seconds)
- www.UofMHealth.org/transplant
University of Michigan Transplant Center
- www.WeAreTransplant.com
We are Transplant
- www.UNOS.org
United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS)

Steps to Living Liver Donation

- Contact the Living Donor Office at **(800) 333-9013** or **txp-donors@med.umich.edu** to complete initial intake and determine eligibility
- Review any records if requested to determine if donor is eligible to proceed with evaluation
- Obtain verification of blood type and liver function blood test
- Complete a formal evaluation. This may consist of a few appointments at Michigan Medicine University of Michigan Hospital
- Complete cancer screening according to the American Cancer Society Guidelines. **(This is considered general health maintenance and should be covered by the donor's insurance.)**

Financial Perspective

Expenses related to living donation evaluation process for Living Donors are covered by the Transplant Center. However, we are unable to reimburse donors for lost wages, traveling or lodging costs. The National Living Donor Assistance Program is a federally funded program that may be able to provide assistance with costs associated with Living Donation. Please visit www.LivingDonorAssistance.org/documents/NLDAC_Program_Brochure.pdf for more information.

Post-Donation and Recovery

Donors are generally discharged from the hospital within three to six days after surgery. Expected recovery varies, however average recovery time is about six weeks. About 50 percent of donors return to work at four weeks after donation, 75 percent of donors return to work at eight weeks after donation and nearly 100 percent of donors return to work by 12 weeks after donation. This depends on the type of employment and lifestyle the donor is returning to, as well as individual recovery process. A two-week post-operative appointment will be scheduled at Michigan Medicine University Hospital to determine expected clearance to return to daily activities.

Financial Resources for Living Donors

- **National Living Donor Assistance Center**
www.LivingDonorAssistance.org

The National Living Donor Assistance Center (NLDAC) can pay for up to \$6,000 of travel expenses for living organ donors and their caregivers. The program provides funding for the evaluation, surgery and medical follow-up trips. Approved donors receive a credit card, which they can use for transportation, food and lodging expenses on their trips to the transplant center. This is need-based (recipient info required).

This is the only resource where the Donor office will submit the applications for you.

- **American Transplant Foundation**

www.AmericanTransplantFoundation.org

Pays lost wages by directly remitting money to the donor's utility company, bank, or mortgage holder.

- A financial assistance application must be submitted at least one week before the date of the surgery. If approved, the funds will be released to the vendors on the day of the surgery.
- Living donors must be employed in order to qualify for this financial assistance.
- American Transplant Foundation compensates for the wages lost during the recovery period, so the applicant must be employed and experience a loss of income while recovering from the surgery.
- Vendors include, but are not limited to, electricity/gas company, mortgage/rent company, vehicle payment/insurance company.

Living donor application must include:

- Signed documentation from the applicant's employer stating specifically how much paid time off and/or short-term disability the person has available for use during their recovery.
- The applicant's most recent pay-stub from their employer.

Submit documentation to:

American Transplant Foundation

600 17th Street, Suite 2515 S

Denver, CO 80202

Phone: (303) 757-0959, Fax: (303) 757-2990

Email: Support@AmericanTransplantFoundation.org

- **American Living Organ Donor Fund**

www.HelpLivingDonorsSaveLives.org

Pays lost wages. ALODF provides assistance to living organ donors regardless of their financial status. They understand that sometimes the issue is not income, but whether a person has enough paid time off and money to pay bills during recovery. The ALODF prefers to receive applications for financial assistance before a donor's surgery, but will accept them up to two months after donation. The ability to help living organ donors depends on the availability of funds.

Apply online at **www.HelpLivingDonorsSaveLives.org/apply-for-help**. A living donor social worker will assist you further once your application is submitted.

Fundraising Organization

The National Organ Transplant Act prohibits individuals from profiting from organ donation. Working with these organizations ensures that you, as a donor, are fully compliant with all laws and regulation governing organ donation.

- **Help Hope Live**

www.HelpHopeLive.org/transplant-fundraising

National nonprofit foundation that can cover some living donor expenses out of funds raised in honor of the transplant recipient. Phone: (800) 642-8399.

To learn more about fundraising, visit **www.LiveDonorToolkit.com/financial-toolkit/fundraising-living-donor-expenses-%E2%80%93-q**

Spreading the Word

Consider sending a letter or email to spread the word of your need for a liver transplant. Below is an example of wording you could use to educate people about becoming a living liver donor.

Dear _____,

As you may or may not know, I have end-stage liver disease. My doctors have recommended that I consider getting a liver transplant. I am asking for your help in spreading the word of my need for a liver transplant.

I will be put on the deceased donor waiting list, but there are more than 12,000 people on the list and people usually become increasingly ill while waiting. Living donation affords people the opportunity to be transplanted before they become extremely ill and develop other health issues as a result of liver disease.

The living donor evaluation process is very detailed and the welfare of the donor is always the priority of the transplant team. All costs associated with a living donor evaluation and surgery are covered by the Michigan Medicine Transplant Center and there is the possibility of travel and lodging reimbursement for the donor.

If you would be willing to help share my need for a living donor with your community of friends and family, I would appreciate it. It is possible that one of them, or someone they know, would want to help.

Finally, I want to ask you to consider becoming a living donor for me. I know that this is a personal decision that isn't right for everyone. Please know that if you are not able to consider living donation, it will not affect our relationship or how I feel about you.

Please visit **www.UofMHealth.org/conditions-treatments/transplant/liver-transplant** if you're interested in learning more about living donation, or you can contact the Transplant Center at **(800) 333-9013** to speak with a staff member directly. You can also email them at **txp-donors@med.umich.edu**. They will be glad to answer your questions.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and for caring about me.

Sincerely,

Living Liver Donor Intake Form

Intake Completed By:		Donor MRN:		Date:	
Donor Name: Click here to enter text. DOB: Click here to enter text. SSN: Click here to enter text. Address: Click here to enter text. Phone: Click here to enter text. Click here to enter text. Alt Phone: Click here to enter text. Okay to leave VM? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Email: Click here to enter text. Recipient Name: Click here to enter text. Recipient MRN: Relationship to Recipient:				Height: Weight: BMI: Recent weight increase/decrease? Explain: Donor ABO: Country of Birth: Ethnicity: Occupation: Disability? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Recipient aware of potential donor? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
	Yes	No	Comments	Current Medications:	
High blood pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Family history of High Blood Pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Diabetes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Family history of Diabetes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Respiratory Conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Cardiac Conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Liver Problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Drug Allergies & Reaction:	
Family History of Liver Problems					
Exposure to infectious diseases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Kidney Problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Blood Clots	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Cancer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Mental Health Diagnosis & Treatments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Health Insurance/Type: Enrollee ID/Subscriber ID/Member ID:	
Illicit Drug Use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		PCP Name: PCP Contact:	
Alcohol Consumption	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Smoker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Notes: Click here to enter text.	
Pregnant or Recent Pregnancy (within a year)? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> N/A					
Surgical History:					
Outstanding Legal Matters? (such as probation/parole) <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N If yes, please explain:					

