

# THE HEART TRANSPLANT EVALUATION PROCESS AT UPMC

At UPMC, we understand that the heart transplant evaluation process may seem overwhelming. We have a team of dedicated transplant experts to answer your questions and provide support every step of the way. At the beginning of your journey, you will be assigned a transplant coordinator dedicated to providing you with personalized care that meets your specific needs.

Our team is here to address all aspects of the heart transplant evaluation process, including:

- Physical
- Social
- Mental
- Financial

**Step One** – Your doctor refers you to UPMC for a heart transplant evaluation.

**Step Two** – Our multidisciplinary team of experts will review your medical history and insurance. We work closely with your referring doctor to learn about your medical history and how a transplant might help you.

- A nurse coordinator at UPMC will review your medical records and will contact you to discuss your medical history.
- A transplant finance specialist will contact your insurance provider to verify your medical benefits and to ensure that your insurance is accepted at UPMC.

**Step Three** – After insurance and financial approval, the transplant coordinator will work with you and your caregiver to schedule outpatient tests and consults with our transplant team. The transplant team will use these tests and consults to determine if a heart transplant is the best treatment option for you. These will take about a week to complete.

- We offer affordable housing options to patients and their families who travel to receive treatment for serious illnesses.
- You must bring a caregiver to come with you to each appointment.

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**Step Four** – The UPMC Heart Transplant team will perform a series of pre-heart transplant tests. These may include:

- Echocardiogram
- Electrocardiogram
- Heart catheterization
- MVO2 (exercise stress test)
- Chest x-ray
- Pulmonary function tests
- Bilateral lower extremity Doppler and carotid Doppler
- Ultrasound of the abdomen/pelvis
- Blood work
- CT scans
- Consultations

These tests will help our team understand the severity of your condition and if your other organ systems are healthy enough to undergo the surgery and support your recovery.

The heart transplant selection team will review your exam and test results to decide if a heart transplant is the best treatment option for you. When possible, your care team will look for other heart failure treatments before moving forward with transplant.

## **Next Steps: The Heart Transplant Waiting List**

If the UPMC Heart Transplant team determines that a transplant is right for you, they will place you on the UNOS (United Network for Organ Sharing) heart transplant wait list based on your evaluation results. You will always need to be within four hours of the hospital while you're on the heart transplant waiting list.

- Experts will match donor organs to heart transplant patients of like size and blood type.
- As you wait for a heart, you'll need to follow the diet and lifestyle guidance we give you.

## **Why Choose UPMC?**

At UPMC, our heart transplant surgeons have more than 30 years of experience. They accept some of the most complex cases and may see you, even if other transplant centers said you're not a candidate.

Our experts provide life-saving care to patients suffering from severe heart disease and heart failure and has a strong legacy in cardiothoracic transplantation.

- UPMC was the first center to discharge a patient home after a cardiac assist device implantation.
- Under the direction of David Kaczorowski, MD, our team has achieved successful outcomes and increased survival rate for heart transplant recipients.
- UPMC maintains an active donation after circulatory death program to make donor hearts more available to our patients.

The heart transplant team is here to provide support and answer any questions you have for you throughout your entire transplant journey.

## **Contact Us**

To speak with a member of our team, call **412-648-6202** or visit our website **UPMC.com/HeartTransplant**.