

# THE WAITING PERIOD

The waiting period varies depending on the type of transplant you need, your blood type, your height and weight, and in some cases, your tissue type. You should ask the transplant team to estimate your approximate waiting time. During the waiting period, we will work with you to closely assist you in remaining as healthy as possible.

You will be followed by your primary referring physician, who will remain in contact with the Transplant Team. In addition, you will be seen in the transplant clinic periodically.

It is very important that you keep your Transplant Coordinator aware of your medical condition. If you are hospitalized for any reason your transplant team should be notified.

## Orientation Classes

We offer orientation classes for patients that are awaiting a transplant, or want to know more about living donation. Our orientation classes are given once a month and we encourage all patients to attend and bring a family member or friend. This class enables patients, like you, to ask questions about all aspects of transplantation in a casual setting. Ask your coordinator how to sign up.

## Communication

At the time your name is placed on the transplant waiting list, you should verify that our listing of phone numbers, beeper numbers, and contact persons are accurate in order to ensure that we will be able to reach you quickly, should an organ become available. It is very important that you keep your Transplant Coordinator aware of all changes in these listings. When you travel, you must give your Transplant Coordinator the dates you will be away and all the information we would need to reach you.

## Beeper/Mobile Phones

Beeper/ Mobile Phones are not mandatory for all transplant candidates. However, it is important that we are able to contact you fairly easily. If you are rarely at home or travel frequently, you may want to get a beeper/ mobile phone. Please provide us with this number when you are placed on the transplant list. If you are unsure about whether you need a beeper or not, feel free to ask your Transplant Coordinator.

## Transportation

It is very important that you make plans IN ADVANCE, for learning when an organ has become available. Regardless of whether you live within a few blocks of the Medical Center or hours away, you should know:

- ❖ How you are going to get to the Medical Center (train schedule, plane schedules, designated driver etc.)
- ❖ How you are going to pay for transportation
- ❖ Who will accompany you and how to reach them quickly

If you need assistance making arrangements the social worker can assist you.

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## Office Visits, Tests and Labs

Once you have been placed on a transplant list, it is important that you continue to see both your primary doctor and the transplant team on a regular basis. You should plan on seeing the transplant team every 3 months if you are awaiting a liver transplant, and every 9 months if you are awaiting a kidney transplant.

If you are waiting for a liver transplant blood testing will be required to test for creatinine (an indicator of kidney function), INR (estimates bleeding time) and bilirubin (an enzyme in the liver which is used to indicate the severity of liver disease), in order for us to determine your “MELD SCORE”. MELD stands for a **M**odel for **E**nd stage **L**iver **D**isease. Based on these labs you are assigned a numerical score from 7 to 40. The higher the score, the more likely you are to acquire an organ. The need for blood tests is determined by how high your score is. You will need to have laboratory testing done at least every 3 months, and an MRI of the liver every 6 months. If you have a cancer we would require that you have a MRI every 3 months.

If you are awaiting a kidney transplant ensure that your dialysis center sends a tube of your blood to our tissue typing lab each month.

An annual echocardiograms and stress tests to check your heart is required..

## Vaccinations

While waiting for your transplant you should get vaccinated against hepatitis B. This can be done with your primary doctor, hepatologist (liver specialist), or at dialysis. The vaccination is a series of 3 injections which is given over 3 months. Your doctor or our transplant team can then do a test to see if the vaccines worked. This would mean you have developed immunity (protection) from getting hepatitis B. Ask your coordinator how to set this up.