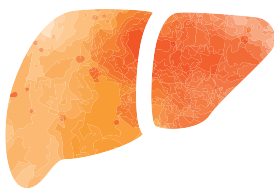




**University Hospitals
Birmingham**
NHS Foundation Trust

Living Donor Liver Transplantation (LDLT)

Liver
Transplant



B I R M I N G H A M

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Introduction

You are on the liver transplant waiting list. This means you either have end-stage liver disease or serious symptoms from your liver condition. You might also be on the list because of liver cancer or another genetic issue affecting your liver.

In the UK, most liver transplants come from people who have died and donated their organs. However, because the demand for liver transplants is so high, there are fewer donor livers available.

This means people needing a liver transplant often must wait for a suitable donor organ however, around 15 out of every 100 people waiting for a liver transplant will sadly die before getting the chance to have a transplant.

The national liver offering system (the national waiting list) for chronic liver disease or liver cancer prioritises people using a score called the Transplant Benefit Score. This score matches available organs from people who have died, with those who need them, considering both the recipient and the donor's details.

The factors that affect this score include your age, the reason for your liver disease, and how severe your illness is based on blood test results.

If your score isn't high enough to receive one of these organs, you now have other options.

These include organs from people who have died after brain death outside of the national offering system, these are known as DBD organs, and organs from non-heart beating donors (known as donation after circulatory death or DCD organs).

New technology has made it safer to use these organs, and it is now a routine way of increasing your chances of having a successful transplant sooner.

However, even with these options, some people are still not getting the liver transplant they need in time.

One option is to receive a part of a healthy liver from a living donor. Since the liver is bigger than we need, a portion of a healthy person's liver can be transplanted into someone who needs it. This liver can then regrow within weeks.

This is common practice in parts of the world where it is hard to get organs from people who have died. Many countries, including the UK, have been performing living donor liver transplants (LDLT) for over 20 years, with excellent results for the person receiving the transplant.

What can Living Donor Liver Transplants offer?

Living donor liver transplants increase the number of organs available, giving more people the chance of a transplant. It also provides some certainty that is not possible when waiting for a deceased donor.

One of the biggest advantages is that the transplant can happen before your health gets worse, at a time that works best for you.

Organs from living donors are usually high-quality because of the thorough tests the donor must go through. For donors, it is an opportunity to help a loved one in a meaningful way, and many donors find it rewarding to be able to give the gift of life.

However, it is important to balance these benefits with the risks. Donors, who are healthy, will undergo major surgery, which comes with significant risks.

There is a small but real risk of death: this risk is about 1 in 200 people who donate the larger right portion of their liver (usually for an adult-to-adult transplant), and about 1 in 500 who donate the smaller left portion (usually for adult-to-child transplants).

The donor's safety is the top priority of the team assessing and supporting them. The team will not allow a donation to go ahead if they think it puts the donor at any major physical, mental, or emotional risk. Donors must make their decision freely and cannot be pressured or paid for their donation.

It is important to remember that fewer than 1 in 5 potential living donors are found to be suitable, and not all recipients will be able to receive a living donor transplant.

Who can donate?

A living donor liver transplant requires a healthy person to volunteer to give part of their liver to someone who needs it.

The person volunteering must decide to do this completely on their own, fully understanding the benefits and risks. They need to be sure that this is something they are comfortable with.

The donor is often a close family member or friend (this is called a directed live donation). Sometimes, people who do not have a personal connection may choose to donate to someone on the waiting list (this is called non-directed altruistic donation). They may also choose to donate specifically to you (this is called directed altruistic donation). Altruistic donations require a more in-depth assessment process than directed live donations.

More information on the different types of donations can be found in the helpful resources by NHS Blood and Transplant online:

www.organdonation.nhs.uk/become-a-living-donor/

Donors must be over 18 years old and there is no set upper age limit, but donors over 50 will only be considered if they are extremely fit and healthy.

A donor must have a compatible blood group with you. Their first blood test will check this, and it can often be requested through their GP.

Donors must be in excellent physical and emotional health, and the assessment process will reflect this. We aim to complete the assessment within a few weeks to give you and your donor some certainty and to make decisions quickly and safely.

What Does Living Donor Liver Transplantation Involve?

First, you need to be comfortable receiving a liver from a living donor.

You and your potential donor should talk openly about this and agree on what to do. If you choose to start the assessment process, you can change your mind at any time if you have concerns. Both you and your donor can decide to stop the process for any reason, right up until the surgery begins.

The donor will go through a series of tests and scans to ensure they are physically and mentally healthy, that their liver is suitable, and that you and the donor are a good match.

The donor will meet a team of specialists to make sure it is safe for them to donate. This includes a live donor coordinator, liver specialist, liver surgeon, anaesthetist, psychiatrist, a donor advocate doctor, and an independent assessor from the Human Tissue Authority, who will make sure the donor understands the decision they are making and that they are not being pressured or offered any rewards for donating.

You will stay on the waiting list for a liver from a deceased donor while the assessment is ongoing, so you do not miss other transplant opportunities.

What next?

If you have any questions after reading this leaflet, please contact the live donor coordinator.

If you have talked with a potential donor and they are comfortable, give them the Live Donor Contact Card or the contact details below.

They can contact us when they are ready, and we will answer any questions they may have and provide more information to help them make an informed decision.

Contact details

Live Donor Coordinator: **Leah Ramdharry**

Telephone: **0121 371 4530**

Email: **liveliverdonor@uhb.nhs.uk**

Please use the space below to write down any questions you may have and bring this with you to your next appointment.

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