

# LIVER TRANSPLANT PATIENT RESOURCES

## WHAT TO EXPECT

When referred to UAB Medicine for a liver transplant, you will be scheduled for 2-4 days of outpatient testing. If you are hospitalized and too ill to be seen as an outpatient, your local doctor can discuss your case with UAB physicians. This doctor-to-doctor communication may lead to your transfer to UAB Hospital for an inpatient evaluation. Whether performed on an inpatient or outpatient basis, some or all of the following tests may be scheduled as part of your evaluation. Other tests may be needed later as a follow-up to the initial results.

## POSSIBLE EVALUATION TESTS

**BLOOD AND URINE TESTS** will rule out certain infectious diseases and will measure:

- Various blood counts such as white and red cells and platelets
- Blood type
- Blood chemistries
- Kidney and liver functions
- The presence of viruses and/or antibodies to viruses – exposure to some common viruses will not prohibit liver transplantation, but are important for management after transplantation. In some cases vaccination prior to transplant may be recommended.
- Levels of various drugs, nicotine and alcohol

**CHEST X-RAYS** determine the health of your lungs.

### IMAGING SCANS MAY INCLUDE:

- **Ultrasound** and/or **CT (CAT) scan** show the size and shape of the liver and major blood vessels. They may also detect liver lesions or tumors.
- **MRI (magnetic resonance imaging)** provides similar images but may be useful when more information is needed or if the patient can't tolerate dyes used in radiology.

**ELECTROCARDIOGRAM (EKG)** shows heart rhythm and may reveal past damage.

**ECHOCARDIOGRAM (ECHO)** shows the function of heart valves, measures pressure in the pulmonary artery, and determines the sizes of the heart chambers.

**PULMONARY FUNCTION TEST (PFT)** requires breathing forcefully into a tube to measure how well the lungs are working and the ability of the blood to carry oxygen.

**ARTERIAL BLOOD GASES (ABGS)** require that a small syringe of blood be drawn from the artery in your wrist.

**ADDITIONAL HEART TESTING** may be required if you have a history of heart or vascular disease or if there are significant risk factors for hidden or silent heart disease.

## DISCUSSIONS WITH THE TEAM

**INTERVIEWS** with a transplant social worker, a neuropsychologist, and a transplant nurse coordinator help determine how you and your family cope with stressors. You will learn more about financial costs and resources available to transplant recipients.

**CONSULTATIONS** with a liver transplant surgeon and a hepatologist (liver specialist) allow the physicians to talk with you about your medical history, discuss the liver transplantation process, and answer any questions you or your family may have.

### THESE TESTS AND DISCUSSIONS HELP THE UAB TRANSPLANT TEAM DETERMINE IF:

- a transplant is right for you at this time;
- there are any problems such as closed blood vessels that could complicate your surgery;
- you are physically able to undergo transplant surgery;
- there are emotional, psychological, or family issues that should be addressed.

The tests and interviews you'll undergo will help the UAB transplant team determine the best way to *maximize your chances* of achieving the best results in treating your liver disease. The transplant team meets weekly to review patients' evaluation results. You will be notified in writing of the committee's recommendations approximately 7-10 days after you complete your evaluations.