



PILOT™ Patient Counseling Tools

Preparation for Transplant

As part of your treatment options, your doctor may have discussed the possibility of a lung transplant. The purpose of this document is to provide a brief overview of the procedure. You may have many questions as you prepare, and it is important to know that you do not need to face your concerns alone. Share any concerns you have with your doctor and your family as you consider this important step.

WHAT IS A LUNG TRANSPLANT?

This is a surgical procedure in which one or both of your lungs are replaced with healthy lungs from a person who has recently died but whose body is maintained on life support.

HOW DOES THE TRANSPLANT SYSTEM WORK?

In 2005 a new US lung allocation system was established. These guidelines replaced the old model that was primarily based on a first-come/first-served system. The new guidelines are based on a lung allocation score (LAS), which assigns priority to candidates who are at high risk of death if they do not receive a transplant and likely to live longer with a transplant.

The United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) maintains a centralized computer network linking all organ procurement organizations and transplant centers. The system is designed to efficiently match recipients with available organs. After your doctor refers you to a transplant center, you will be evaluated with a series of physical and psychological exams. Details about each specific exam will be provided as you begin the evaluation process.

When these tests are completed, you will receive an LAS and be placed on a recipient list. When a lung becomes available, the transplant coordinator enters information about the organ (size, tissue match, blood type, geographic location) into the UNOS computer and a prioritized match list is generated. The computer program gives highest ranking to patients with both the greatest need and the greatest likelihood for a successful transplant. The organ is then offered to the top candidate on the list.

Once a candidate is selected, the surgery is done as soon as possible.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AFTER MY TRANSPLANT?

The first year after transplant is the most critical period, when you are most susceptible to infection, organ rejection, and complications from the surgery.

You may experience some pain and discomfort after the operation. After surgery you will probably remain in the hospital for 1-2 weeks. You will receive an immunosuppressant drug to prevent rejection of your new lung, and your doctor will give you a blood test periodically to confirm that you are receiving the proper dose. Before leaving the hospital you will receive guidance on how to optimize your health through physical activity, breathing exercises, nutrition, follow-up visits, and medications.



WHAT STEPS CAN I TAKE TO PREPARE FOR A LUNG TRANSPLANT?

It is important to maintain your general health before your lung transplant. Your doctor will give you an exercise program and a plan for managing your weight. As your hospital stay approaches, you should arrange these matters:

- Advance directives (will, living will, durable power of attorney)
- Transportation to and from the hospital
- Help at home for when you return
- Medications, as directed by your doctor

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

As you prepare for your evaluation for lung transplant, you may want to ask your doctor:

- Is a lung transplant my best treatment option?
- What are the benefits and risks of transplantation?
- What does the evaluation and testing process include?
- What part of the transplant cost is covered by my insurance?
- How do I find out more about the transplant process?

Transplantation can be a long and challenging process. The thought of having an organ transplant may be frightening or overwhelming, but a transplant may greatly improve your quality of life.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Coalition for Pulmonary Fibrosis	http://www.coalitionforpf.org/
International Society for Heart & Lung Transplantation	www.ishlt.org
United Network for Organ Sharing	http://unos.org/
* American Lung Association	http://www.lungusa.org

* (For specific information on IPF on the Web site above, please click on "Diseases A-Z," and then "Interstitial Lung Disease and Pulmonary Fibrosis")