

LISTING PROCESS

The Waiting List

United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) is the professional organization through which the transplant team obtains organs for candidates in the State of Michigan. This organization participates in the distribution of organs throughout the United States and Canada.

Potential transplant recipients from Michigan Medicine are listed through UNOS on a nationwide, computerized donor-recipient match list. Candidates are listed according to blood type, body size and urgency for transplantation.

Depending on the severity of the medical condition, it is possible to wait for a heart either at the University of Michigan Congenital Heart Center, home or temporary lodging. Candidates waiting outside the hospital will be given specific instructions on maintaining contact with the procurement coordinator.

It is very important for the transplant coordinator to have several accurate telephone numbers where the candidate may be reached. Remember to call the transplant coordinator with any changes in telephone numbers. If the candidate is going to leave the area or go away for the weekend, please call the transplant coordinator during office hours to leave a current number should a heart become available. The transplant coordinator will provide the appropriate people with this information. Otherwise, we will assume the candidate is at home.

The procurement coordinator is informed of all available hearts 24 hours-a-day. When a suitable donor is located, the procurement coordinator is notified. That person then orders extensive examinations of the donor to ensure that the heart is healthy and functions well.

Often the donor will be some distance away, frequently in another state, so the procurement coordinator arranges for members of the University of Michigan Transplant Team to fly to the donor hospital to get the heart. This may require a helicopter and Lear Jet air emergency service, depending on the distance from the donor to Michigan Medicine.



Once the heart has initially been accepted, the candidate will be notified. As soon as the team believes the donor heart is adequate, specific directions will be given about exactly what to do and what not to do.

For the candidate waiting outside the hospital, he/she will need to leave very shortly after the procurement coordinator's call. It may be helpful to have a suitcase packed and ready at all times. You may want to bring the following: loose fitting clothing such as pajamas and a bathrobe, blanket or other comforting items. Medicines will be provided at the hospital. Bring glasses, but personal valuables, such as jewelry, must be left at home.

Family members need to be prepared to spend some time in Ann Arbor and may wish to keep a packed bag with cell phone charger, education book and some spending money. Remember to pack some comfortable clothing for yourself as well. To prevent exposing the candidate to infection, family members who have colds should not come to the hospital. Please remember to bring family member medications!

You Should Know

Please remember to bring family member medications!

You may find it helpful to plan your route and transportation to the hospital ahead of time and to have an alternate plan ready in case of car trouble, bad weather or construction.

If there are any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the transplant coordinator at any time. Please refer to the "Transplant Team" page for contact information.

It is important to note that at any time during this process, the donor heart may be deemed unacceptable and the transplant will be cancelled. In this event, the candidate will resume waiting.

You Should Know

Please refer to the "Transplant Team" page for contact information.

Admission to the Hospital for the Operation

The procurement coordinator will notify the candidate and his/her family when a heart becomes available. The candidate will not be allowed to eat or drink anything after this phone call and before the operation. It is important that the stomach be empty before the surgery. Once at the hospital and admitted for transplant surgery, the candidate will receive a complete physical examination, chest x-ray, and lab work. If there are any signs of active infection or illness, the transplant will have to be cancelled. Once the candidate has been cleared for surgery, the doctor will then ask to have signed consent.