

Heart Transplant Patient Guide

Comprehensive Care and Recovery Resources

Society for Heart Failure and Transplantation

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Heart Transplant Process Overview

Transplant Evaluation Process

1 Initial Referral & Assessment

Comprehensive medical evaluation including cardiac catheterization, pulmonary function tests, and psychosocial assessment.

2 Multidisciplinary Team Review

Cardiologists, surgeons, social workers, and specialists review candidacy based on ISHLT 2024 guidelines.

3 Listing Decision & UNOS Registration

If approved, patient is listed with United Network for Organ Sharing based on medical urgency and compatibility.

4 Waiting Period & Optimization

Ongoing medical management, physical conditioning, and regular monitoring while awaiting donor heart.







🕒 Typical Timeline Expectations

- 📅 **Evaluation:** 2-4 weeks for complete assessment and team review
- ⌚ **Wait time:** 6-12 months depending on blood type, body size, and urgency
- 🏥 **Hospital stay:** 2-3 weeks post-transplant with intensive monitoring
- 🏠 **Recovery:** 3-6 months initial recovery, lifelong follow-up required





Post-Transplant Care Guidelines

Medication Management

-  **Immunosuppressive medications** must be taken exactly as prescribed to prevent organ rejection throughout your lifetime.
-  Take medications at the **same time daily** and never skip doses without consulting your transplant team first.
-  Regular **blood level monitoring** ensures proper medication dosing and early detection of complications.
-  Report any **side effects immediately** including nausea, tremors, kidney problems, or unusual symptoms.

Remember: Your transplant medications suppress your immune system to protect your new heart, making consistent adherence critical for long-term success.

Infection Prevention

-  Practice **frequent hand hygiene** and avoid contact with people who have active infections or recent vaccinations.
-  Wear masks in crowded places and maintain **social distancing** especially during cold and flu seasons.
-  Monitor for **fever, chills, or unusual fatigue** and contact your transplant team immediately if symptoms develop.
-  Follow recommended **vaccination schedule** with inactivated vaccines only as directed by your transplant team.

Critical: Your suppressed immune system makes infections more serious. Early recognition and treatment of infections can prevent life-threatening complications.