



Transplant Dictionary

Transplant Terms

Acute: When a health problem begins suddenly, and symptoms develop quickly.

Acute Alcoholic Hepatitis (AAH): When drinking alcohol causes the liver to swell. This swelling can cause fever, jaundice, nausea, vomiting, etc.

Acute Kidney Injury: When the kidneys cannot remove waste from the blood to balance fluid in the body. Acute kidney injury can happen quickly and with no warning signs.

Acute Liver Failure: See fulminant liver failure.

Adherence: When a patient follows the instructions of their medical providers. (Also called compliance.)

Advanced Care Planning: When a person plans their future medical treatment, in case they are not mentally or physically able to make decisions in the future.

Advanced Directives: Legal documents a person completes to plan end-of-life care and choose a medical power of attorney (representative), in case they are not mentally or physically able to make decisions in the future.

Allograft: A donated organ.

Angiogram: A test that uses x-rays to take pictures of blood vessels.

Bilirubin: A yellowish substance in the blood, made when red blood cells break down. Too much bilirubin can be a warning sign for liver problems.

Biopsy: When a medical provider removes a piece of tissue from an organ to test for disease in the organ.

Blood Typing: A test to learn blood type.

Blood Urea Nitrogen (BUN): A test to measure how much urea nitrogen is in a patient's blood. It checks to see if their kidneys and liver are working well.

Breathing Tube: If a patient needs help breathing, this tube goes in their mouth or nose to help air enter their lungs.

Bronchoscopy: When a medical provider puts an endoscope (a thin tube with a camera) through a patient's nose or mouth to see their lungs.

Cardiac Catheterization: When a medical provider puts a catheter (very small tube) through a blood vessel in a patient's neck or groin to check the pressure and blood flow in their heart. (Also called Coronary Angiography, Cardiac Cath, or Heart Cath.)

Caregiver: A person (usually family or friend) who gives ongoing care to a transplant patient or living donor.

Cardiac Rehabilitation: A medical program that helps patients improve heart (cardiovascular) health after heart surgery, heart transplant, or LVAD implant.

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD): When kidneys slowly become so damaged they cannot filter blood anymore.

Colonoscopy: When a medical provider puts a long flexible tube with a video camera in a patient's rectum to look for changes or irregularities in their large intestine and rectum.

Complete Blood Count (CBC): A group of blood tests that count the number of cells in the blood. Medical providers use a CBC to see how healthy a patient is and to find possible health problems.

Computed Tomography Scan (CT or CAT scan): A scan that uses x-rays and a computer to create detailed pictures of organs, bones, and other things inside the body.

Creatinine: A lab test to see how well the kidneys are working.

Crossmatch: A blood test to make sure an organ donor and transplant patient (organ recipient) are compatible.

Cyclosporine: An anti-rejection (immunosuppressant) medication for organ transplant patients.

Cytomegalovirus (CMV): A common viral infection that hurts transplant patients with weakened immune systems.

Cystoscopy (also referred to as cystourethroscopy): A test to see how well the bladder and urethra (tube that carries urine from the bladder to outside the body) are working. (Also called bladder scope.)

Cystourethrogram: An x-ray test of the bladder to see the size of the bladder and how well it drains urine.

Deceased donor: An organ donor who is dead. (Also called cadaveric donor.)

Delirium: Sudden changes in the brain that can affect the mental and emotional health of a patient, often when they are hospitalized, are in an intensive care unit, or have organ failure.

De-Listing: When a patient is removed from the transplant wait list without receiving an organ transplant. The transplant team or the patient can make this decision.

Dialysis: A medical procedure that uses machines to filter out extra fluid and waste from the blood (if a patient's kidneys aren't healthy enough to do it).

Donor: A person (living or deceased) who donates their organs.

Do Not Resuscitate Order (DNR): A medical order (written by a doctor) telling healthcare providers not to use CPR if a person stops breathing or if their heart stops beating.

Doppler Ultrasound: A test that uses sound waves (ultrasound) to measure how much blood is flowing in the blood vessels.

Echocardiogram (ECHO): A test that uses sound waves (ultrasound) to create a picture of the heart. Doctors use these pictures to look for heart disease.

Edema: When extra fluid in the body's tissue causes swelling. (Also called fluid retention.)

Ejection Fraction: A measurement of the percentage of blood that leaves the heart every time the heart pumps. This shows how well the heart is pumping blood.

Electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG): A test that screens for health problems by measuring the electrical activity of the heart.

End-Stage Liver Disease (ESLD): When a patient's liver stops working. (Also called chronic liver failure.)

End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD): When a patient's kidneys stop working. (Also called end-stage kidney disease, or ESKD.)

Expected Post Transplant Survival (EPTS) score: Adult kidney transplant patients receive a score that estimates how long a patient is likely to benefit from a kidney transplant.

Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO): When a medical provider puts catheters (small tubes) in a vein in a patient's neck, groin, or chest to pump oxygen into their blood. Usually, patients are sedated and on a ventilator.

Ex-vivo Lung Perfusion (EVLV): Technology that circulates a solution (nutrients, proteins, and oxygen) through donor lungs, to improve their health and reverse lung damage. With this technology, transplant centers have more (and healthier) donor lungs available for transplant.

Family Meeting: When the treatment team teaches the patient, primary caregiver, secondary caregiver, and/or other support people about the transplant process and caregiving responsibilities. They will also make sure the patient has enough support to receive a transplant.

Fibrosis: When the body's tissues thicken, harden, or scar.

Fibroscan: A test that uses sound waves (ultrasound) to measure how healthy the liver is and to see if tissues in the liver are scarred (fibrosis).

Fluoroscopy: Imaging that uses continuous x-ray to show live (real-time) pictures of what's happening inside the body, almost like a movie.

Family Medical Leave of Absence (FMLA): A federal law that protects a person's job if they need to take leave to care for family members with medical problems.

Fulminant Liver Failure: When the liver fails (stops working) very quickly. (Also called acute liver failure or fulminant hepatic failure.)

Family Responsibilities Discrimination (FRD): When employees are discriminated against, because of their family caregiving responsibilities.

Fundraising: Requesting and accepting donated money from individuals or organizations.

Glucose: A type of sugar the body gets from food and uses for energy.

Graft: The transplanted organ.

Guardianship: A legal process that gives a guardian the right to protect and care for a person when they have a disability and cannot care for themselves.

Healthcare Proxy: See Power of Attorney for Health Care.

Hepatic Encephalopathy: When a patient feels confused, drowsy, or anxious because their liver is too damaged to remove toxins from the blood and it affects their brain.

HIPAA: The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 is a federal law that protects confidential health information from being shared without a patient's permission.

Hold/Being put on a hold or inactive/Status 7: When a patient is on the list for organ transplant, but will **not** receive an organ, even if an organ is available and a good match. Usually, this is temporary. A patient might be on a hold if they have an infection, an insurance problem, or they need to update a test. The hold ends when the patient heals, fixes the insurance problem, or updates the test.

Hospice: Healthcare that focuses on pain and symptom management and the emotional and spiritual needs at the end of life (when a patient is dying).

Human Leukocyte Antigens (HLA): When proteins that help regulate the body's immune system cause the body to reject a transplanted organ.

Hypoxia: When a patient's blood does not carry enough oxygen to their tissues. This can affect their whole body or one part, and it can be serious if not treated.

Immune System: The network of cells and proteins that defends the body from infection.

Immunosuppressants: Medicines that transplant recipients take to lower the risk of their body rejecting their new organ. (Also called anti-rejection medicines.)

Immunosuppression: When a patient's body has no (or almost no) immune system.

Increased Risk Donor: A deceased donor with higher risk of spreading unknown human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B, or hepatitis C (HCV) to a transplant patient. If a transplant patient accepts an organ from an increased risk donor they might wait less time for an organ.

Intensive Care Unit (ICU): Hospital care that provides constant observation and care for patients who are very ill.

Intravenous (IV): When something (like medication) is put directly into a patient's vein(s).

Jaundice: When a patient's skin and the whites of their eyes turn yellow because they have a lot of bilirubin in their blood. This usually means their liver is not working well.

Laparoscopy: When a surgeon puts a laparoscope (small tube with a light and a camera) into a very small cut in a patient's skin to work inside their body. (Also called minimally invasive surgery or key-hole surgery.)

Left Ventricular Assist Device (LVAD): A mechanical pump that pumps blood from the left ventricle of the heart through the rest of the body. A medical provider puts the pump into the patient's chest, and the pump is connected to a controller and battery pack outside of their body through a small cut in their stomach.

Legal Next of Kin: A person's closest living relative (family).

List/Listing: When a patient's name is on the list of people waiting for a specific organ transplant. Patients receive a phone call and letter from their transplant center, confirming they are on the waiting list for an organ.

Living Donation: When a living person donates an organ or part of an organ to a transplant patient.

Living Will: A document a person uses to write their wishes for medical treatment, in case they are physically or mentally not able to make health decisions in the future.

Lung Allocation Score (LAS): A score to predict how long a patient can live without a lung transplant, and how long they might live after a lung transplant. The score determines how high the patient is on the lung transplant waitlist.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI): Imaging that uses magnets, radio waves, and a computer to create detailed pictures of inside a patient's body. MRI does not use radiation, unlike CT scans and x-rays.

Medical Power of Attorney: See Power of Attorney for Health Care.

Model for End-stage Liver Disease (MELD): A score for patients on the liver transplant waitlist. The score (6 - 40+) shows how severe their disease is and how long they can live without a new liver. A higher score means the disease is more severe and the chance of survival without a new liver is lower.

Nephrectomy: Surgery to remove kidneys.

Organ Procurement Organizations (OPOs): Not-for-profit organizations that pick up organs from deceased donors and work with donors' families.

Organ Procurement Transplant Network (OPTN): A network that connects donation and transplantation professionals in the United States. It was created in 1984 by the National Organ Transplant Act (NOTA). the United States.

Palliative Care: Healthcare that focuses on quality of life and symptom relief for patients with severe illnesses.

Panel Reactive Antibody (PRA): A blood test before transplant to make sure a patient and donor have compatible HLA antibodies.

Peri-transplant: The time a patient is in the hospital for transplant.

Power of Attorney for Health Care: A legal document gives another person (agent or proxy) authority to make medical decisions for them. (Also called Medical Power of Attorney or Healthcare Proxy.)

Power of Attorney for Finances: A legal document gives another person (agent or attorney-in-fact) authority to make money decisions for them.

Preservation/Organ Preservation: Conserving an organ after it is taken out of the donor's body, so it is healthy for transplant. There are different ways to conserve different organs before transplant surgery.

Preservation Time: How much time an organ can be outside of the body and still be used for transplant. An organ cannot be transplanted if it is outside of the body for too long. Different organs can be out of the body for different amounts of time.

Proxy: The authority to represent another person.

Pulmonary Function Tests (PFT): Tests to measure how well the lungs work.

Pulmonary Rehabilitation: A medical program to teach patients about lung disease and how to exercise their lungs.

Pulse Oximeter: An electronic device to measure how much oxygen is in the blood (oxygen saturation).

Renal Ultrasound: A test that uses sound waves to take pictures of the kidneys, ureters, and bladder.

Rejection: When the transplant patient's immune system tries to attack the new, transplanted organ. This is like the immune system attacking a virus or bacteria in the body.

Right Heart Catheterization (RHC): When a medical provider puts a catheter (small tube) in a vein in a patient's neck or groin to check the pressure and blood flow in the right side of their heart.

Sensitization: When a patient's body has very high levels of antibodies that react to new tissue in their body, like a transplanted organ. If a patient is highly sensitized, it can be harder to find a donor.

Six-minute Walk Tests (6MWT): A test to measure how far a patient can walk in 6 minutes.

Spirometer: A small machine to measure how much air a patient breathes in and out.

Sphygmomanometer: A device to measure blood pressure. (Also called a blood pressure monitor or a blood pressure gauge.)

Steroids: Medicines prescribed with anti-rejection medicines to prevent and treat organ rejection.

Subacute Rehabilitation: Rehabilitation that is less intense than acute rehab. Acute rehab happens in a hospital and requires doctor visits and 3+ hours of therapy (physical, occupational, and speech) every day. Subacute rehabilitation can happen in a skilled (or other) nursing facility and does **not** require doctor visits or 3+ hours of therapy every day. (Also called subacute rehab or SAR.)

Telemetry Unit: Hospital unit where patients have constant electronic monitoring.

Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN): When a patient receives liquid nutrients through their veins, because they cannot take food or liquids by mouth.

Transplant Center or Institute: Specialized medical centers that offer transplant surgery and care. They complete certification and monitoring by national organizations (like UNOS), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, and other regulatory groups.

Transplant Evaluation: Process to decide if a patient is eligible for a transplant and if they will have good health after a transplant.

Ultrasound: A test that uses soundwaves to take pictures.

United Network for Organ Sharing: Private, non-profit organization that manages the organ transplant system within the United States. UNOS has a contract as an OPTN with the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Ureteroscopy: When a medical provider puts a ureteroscope (small scope) into a patient's bladder and ureter to treat kidney or ureter stones.

Vacuum-assisted Wound Closure (Wound VAC): Therapy that helps wounds heal by decreasing the air pressure around the wound. (Also called negative pressure wound therapy.)

Ventilator: A machine that helps a patient breathe. A tube is put down the patient's throat and then hooked to a machine that will help them breathe.

For more terms, please visit: <https://www.organdonor.gov/about/facts-terms/terms.html>

Transplant Personnel

Case Manager makes sure patients receive the correct treatment and appropriate care. They also help patients plan for discharge.

Dietitian/Nutritionist assesses and teaches patients about dietary or nutrition needs during all stages of transplantation.

Financial Coordinator coordinates with insurance companies and provides financial education to the patient.

Unit Nurse cares for the patient at the hospital.

Gastroenterologist is the medical doctor who treats gastrointestinal diseases.

Living Donor Advocate supports and protects the rights of the donor. This person is not part of the transplant patient's team.

Living Donor Coordinator is the nurse who coordinates a donor's evaluation and all details of their health and care after donation.

Occupational Therapist works with patients to remaster skills they need for daily living and independence ("activities of daily living").

Patient Advocate helps patients communicate with their healthcare providers and navigate the healthcare system.

Physical Therapist works with patients to improve their physical strength, functioning, and movement (before transplantation, during hospitalizations, and after transplantation).

Primary Care Physician is the general medical doctor who usually sees patients first.

Psychologist evaluates patients' psychological wellbeing before transplant and provides support and psychological interventions for patients and families during the transplant process.

Psychiatrist is the medical doctor who specializes in mental health and might evaluate patients before transplantation or provide psychiatric medication management and other psychiatric support during the transplant process.

Social Worker works with patients and caregivers during all stages of the transplant process to complete psychosocial evaluations, offer counseling and education, make referrals to community services, and coordinate care within the transplant team.

Transplant Cardiologist is the medical doctor who evaluates and treats heart disease for heart transplant patients.

Transplant Hepatologist is the medical doctor who evaluates and treats liver disease for liver transplant patients.

Transplant Nephrologist is the medical doctor who evaluates and treats kidney disease for kidney transplant patients.

Transplant Pulmonologist is the medical doctor who evaluates and treats lung disease for lung transplant patients.

Transplant Nurse Coordinator coordinates a patient's transplant evaluation and all details of their health and care after transplant.

Transplant Pharmacist works with the transplant doctors to manage transplant medicines and teach patients about their transplant medicines.

Transplant Surgeon performs the transplant surgery.

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