

# Your Transplant Journey Explained

## What to expect during each phase

### Pre-Transplant Phase

#### 1. Referral to UWMC for Treatment

Welcome! A doctor has reviewed your health history and current health and referred you to UWMC for transplant.

#### 2. Financial Clearance for Transplant Evaluation

UWMC Financial Services will work with your health insurance company to make sure that your policy covers your tests and health assessment. Use the time to figure out your short-term and long-term transplant expenses. These expenses will include your hospital stay, surgery, lost wages, travel, medicines, clinic visits, and more.

#### 3. Meet with Transplant Team to Start Workup

Meet your team and share your medical history. We will give you a physical exam and review your mental and emotional history and dietary guidelines. Ask questions. If transplant is an option, the team will decide what tests you need to have.

#### 4. Full Workup, Tests, and Procedures

You must have a full health assessment before you can be listed for transplant. The transplant team will also assess your ability to follow through with the care that will be needed before, during, and after transplant.

#### 5. Transplant Education for Your Specific Needs

Follow the instructions you receive from your transplant team. Learn all you can about transplant.

#### 6. Selection Committee Reviews and Decides

After you complete all your tests and consultations, the selection committee will meet to review your results. They will decide if you meet basic criteria for the transplant. Each type of transplant has its own set of criteria.

#### 7. Financial Clearance for Transplant Listing

Confirm that your health insurance will cover transplant and the medicines you will need to take after transplant. Also plan for how you will cover your living expenses while you cannot work.

#### 8. Placed on Waitlist, If Accepted for Transplant

If accepted for transplant, you are placed on the waitlist. The wait for transplant could last days, months, or years. Make sure we have a reliable way to contact you, day or night.

#### 9. Attend Support Group Meetings

Support groups offer you a way to connect with others who are waiting for transplant or have been through transplant. These meetings are a place to ask questions and a great way to learn more about what to expect.

#### 10. Ongoing Visits and Tests

While you are on the waitlist, you may have blood tests, heart screenings, ultrasounds, and other clinic visits.

#### 11. Wait and Prepare

While waiting, maintain or improve your nutrition and exercise status. Decide who will be your caregiver and support team. If you have children or pets, make plans for their care while you are in the hospital. Make a plan for how you will travel to and from UWMC.

### Transplant Phase

#### 1. Organ Match for You Is Available

Make sure we have the best phone numbers to reach you. You may be called as a *primary recipient* or as a backup.

#### 2. Transplant Surgery

The length of surgery depends on the type of transplant. It includes time for the anesthesiologist to prepare you for transplant and for moving you to intensive care after surgery. The operating room nurse will update your caregiver during surgery. Your surgeon will talk with your caregiver in person when the surgery is done.

#### 3. Intensive Care for Some Patients

Most transplant patients spend some time in intensive care.

#### 4. Hospital Stay

The length of your hospital stay depends on the type of transplant and other factors.

#### 5. Transplant Education for Your Specific Needs

Before you leave the hospital, we will help you learn your new medicines, diet, and physical activity. The transplant team will also schedule your follow-up clinic visits and talk with you about your long-term care.

#### 6. Make Plans to Leave the Hospital

You will not be able to drive until your doctor says it is OK. Plan for a caregiver to give you a ride home. Know how to refill your medicines.

#### 7. Leave the Hospital

When you leave the hospital, know who to contact with any questions or concerns.

### “New Normal” Phase

#### 1. Close Follow-Up with Transplant Team

For 3 to 4 weeks after discharge, you may visit your clinic 2 to 3 times a week. You may also need blood draws, blood pressure checks, and other tests.

#### 2. Attend support group meetings

Support group meetings give you a place to talk about your experiences and concerns and to ask questions.

#### 3. Transplant Education for Your Specific Needs

Review the transplant education you were given for patients, caregivers, and donors.

#### 4. Most Return to Local Healthcare Provider

About 3 months after transplant, you will go back to your primary care provider for your healthcare needs.

#### 5. Continue Regular Follow-up for the Rest of Your Life

You will follow up with the Transplant Clinic every year for the rest of your life.