

## Introduction

The purpose of this book is to give you a guide for questions that come up after your organ transplant.

After your surgery, you will begin the recovery process and life with your new transplanted organ(s). This booklet will help you and your care partner(s) understand the process, learn what you need to know about taking care of yourself and serve as a guide for common questions. Considering the seriousness of the surgery and based on the amount of time you and your family had to get ready for your transplant, you may be feeling somewhat overwhelmed. Remember that you need to heal emotionally, mentally, spiritually, as well as, physically.

While patients want to go back to a “normal life” right away, this will take time. It may be many months before you start to feel you have regained your strength and have a good idea of how to handle your health care. You will leave the hospital with knowledge of your new medicines, your diet and basic health care.

During the time right after your transplant, it may be helpful for you and your family to speak with other post-transplant patients and their families, or take part in a transplant support group to talk about your concerns with transplant. We also encourage you to talk about your concerns with a transplant team member. Transplant nurse coordinators, social workers, psychologist, pharmacists, dieticians and chaplains are available. Please ask your

nurse or your nurse coordinator if you feel you need one of the services.

A transplant coordinator will review this booklet with you before you go home. Please keep this booklet within reach and refer to it when you have questions. You may keep your medicine sheets in this book. Be sure to bring it to clinic for a quick guide to your medicines.

Ask questions when you are not sure about any aspect of your home care. No question is “silly” or unimportant. Do not be shy about asking questions. Our goal is to help you go home with the belief in yourself and the knowledge you need to live your life and care for your transplanted organ.

### Transplant Office Phone Numbers:

|                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Office Phone Number:    | 402.559.5000 |
| Toll-Free Phone Number: | 800.401.4444 |
| Office Fax Number:      | 402.559.8902 |

## **Medical Follow-up after Hospital Discharge**

Right after discharge from the hospital, you will be asked to stay in the Omaha area for several weeks to months or until your health is stable. You will be seen in the Nebraska Medicine – Multi-Organ Transplant Clinic (MOTC) weekly or every other week until you are ready to go home.

The MOTC is located on the level three of the Lied Transplant Center. The MOTC hours for post transplant patients is every Thursday afternoon. Please come to your visit at least 20 minutes early to check in at the clinic.

You will be asked to have regular lab work as ordered by your doctor. You will receive your lab orders upon discharge from the hospital. You may get your lab work drawn in the Diagnostic Center on the first floor of the Durham Outpatient Center.

## **Discharge to Home**

Once you are ready to go home after transplant, you will need to make an appointment with your local primary care doctor within the first few weeks of returning home. Primary care doctors manage overall health and provide preventive health maintenance screenings. You should also see this doctor if you get an illness not related to your transplant.

You will also need to make an appointment with your local liver doctor if you have one (hepatologist or gastroenterologist). Seeing your local liver doctor on a regular basis will help manage any medical problems connected to your liver disease and transplant.

The transplant team will be communicating with your local doctors. Important medical information from your transplant will be sent to them before you go back home so they know what happened to you during the transplant. It is important to let us know if you change doctors at any time after transplant.

You will need to decide where you want to have your lab work done when you go back home. You may have lab work at your doctor's office, another clinic or local hospital. Sometimes you may need to have lab work drawn on a weekend or holiday. Check with your lab to see if they are open during weekends and holidays.

## When to Call the Doctor

The most common complications of transplantation are infection and rejection. Your risk for infection and rejection will lower over time, but will still remain a risk to you for the remainder of your life. Most transplant patients handle colds and flu like any other person.

Some symptoms need treatment as soon as they occur. Below are some general guidelines for when to call 911, go the Emergency Room or call the transplant team.

### **You should go to the Emergency Room or call 911 if you develop:**

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing
- Difficulty speaking, weakness in your arms or legs, severe headache, dizziness or blurred vision
- Sudden mental status changes (unconsciousness, confusion or disorientation)
- Seizures
- Bleeding; coughing up blood or throwing up blood
- Pain or sudden or severe onset of new pain

**Then notify the transplant team.**

### **Call the transplant team after business hours if you develop:**

- Fever higher than 101 degrees Fahrenheit
- Severe loose stools (more than six stools in a 12 hour period)
- Separation of wound edges or swelling around incision
- Redness around incision and incision area is hot to the touch
- Any increase in drainage or drainage that is foul smelling or looks like pus
- Vomiting and not able to keep down any liquids or medications
- Blood in your stool
- Increase in ostomy or stool output
- Inability to tolerate an increase in tube feedings due to stomach cramping, loose stools or vomiting
- Problems urinating, pain or burning, constant urge to urinate or frequent urination

### **Call the transplant team during normal business hours if you have:**

- Flu like symptoms or “feel lousy,” low-grade fever (less than 100 degrees Fahrenheit for 2-3 days)
- Persistent wet cough
- Scratchy throat or pain when swallowing
- White part of your eyes turns yellow
- Started a new medication by a doctor outside of our transplant team

**Call your local pharmacy to request medication refills. They will contact our office if necessary.**

**Call the transplant office if you have trouble getting your medication.**

## Office Information

### **Liver/Intestine Transplant Program**

983285 Nebraska Medical Center  
Omaha, Nebraska 68198-3285

### **Transplant Office Phone Numbers**

Office Phone Number: 402.559.5000  
Toll-Free Phone Number: 800.401.4444  
Office Fax Number: 402.559.8902

**All calls made by 4 p.m. will be answered before the end of the day. All calls will be handled in the order in which they were received.**

### **Transplant Office Hours**

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Weekends and Holidays CLOSED

The transplant coordinator staff is available during these hours for questions, concerns, medicine refills and reviewing medical information.

### **After Hours**

If your call is of an urgent nature, please notify the operator to contact the liver nurse coordinator on call.

If you have a true emergency, please call 911 for immediate attention.