

TALKING ABOUT TRANSPLANTATION

Frequently Asked Questions about
**Multiple Listing and
Waiting Time Transfer**



UNITED NETWORK FOR ORGAN SHARING

UNOS

Who are UNOS and the OPTN?

United Network for Organ Sharing is a non-profit, charitable organization that serves as the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network under contract with the federal government. The OPTN helps create and define organ allocation and distribution policies that make the best use of donated organs. This process involves continuously evaluating new advances and discoveries so policies can be adapted to best serve patients waiting for transplants.

All transplant programs and organ procurement organizations throughout the country are OPTN members and are obligated to follow the policies the OPTN creates for allocating organs.

How am I listed for a transplant?

If you have a condition leading to organ failure, your doctor may recommend you for an organ transplant. A transplant hospital must evaluate and accept you for a transplant before you can be considered a transplant candidate. Each hospital uses its own criteria to decide whether or not to accept someone as a transplant candidate.

How am I considered for organs from deceased donors?

The transplant hospital enters medical data about you into a computerized matching program. The program then considers you for available organs based on a combination of medical factors. These factors include blood and tissue type, medical urgency, body size, distance between the donor and transplant hospital and time spent waiting for a transplant.

The distance between the donor and transplant hospital is important because the less time the organ must be preserved outside the donor's body, the better the chance that it will function when transplanted. For this reason, the matching system will often consider candidates at transplant hospitals close to the donor location before other candidates at hospitals farther away.

What is multiple listing?

Multiple listing involves registering at two or more transplant hospitals. Since candidates at hospitals local to the donor hospital are often considered ahead of those who are more distant, multiple listing may increase your chances of receiving a local organ offer.

Could multiple listing shorten my waiting time for a transplant?

Some studies suggest multiple listing can shorten the average waiting times of kidney transplant candidates by several months. This does not guarantee that every multiple-listed patient will have a shorter waiting time.

Many factors affect how long you might wait for a transplant. Of course, not enough organs are donated each year to meet everyone's needs.

Everyone in the transplant community shares the goal of increasing organ donation to save and enhance more lives.

Are there any restrictions?

OPTN policy allows multiple listing. It will still be up to the individual hospital to decide whether to accept you as a candidate.

You probably would not benefit from listing at multiple hospitals in the same local allocation area. This is because any priority you may get for being at a hospital close to the donor will be much the same among transplant hospitals that are local to each other.

Some transplant programs may not accept multiple-listed patients. Others may set their own requirements for multiple-listed candidates. If you are considering multiple listing, you should ask the transplant team how they handle such requests.

What is involved in multiple listing?

As with any transplant listing, you must be considered and accepted by a transplant hospital. This involves completing an evaluation and agreeing to meet any conditions set by the program (for example, ability to come to the hospital within a certain time if you are called for an organ offer).

Check with your insurance provider to see if they will reimburse the cost of additional evaluations. You should also consider other costs associated with listing that insurance may not cover. For example, you may need to pay for travel and lodging if the hospital is further from your home. You should also find out whether your post-transplant medical care will be provided at the transplant hospital or can be transferred to a facility closer to your home.

In addition, you need to maintain current lab results and contact information for each transplant program where you list. Each program will need current information should they receive an organ offer for you. Through the OPTN database, your program can know if you are multiple-listed but may not know the other hospital(s) where you are listed.

If I list at more than one hospital, how is my waiting time considered?

Depending on the organ you need, waiting time may be a factor in matching you for an organ offer. Waiting time is a more important factor for certain organ types such as kidney and pancreas. It is less of a factor with heart, lung, liver, and intestinal organs. For these organs more priority is given for factors such as medical urgency.

If you are listed for a kidney transplant, your waiting time will be calculated from when you start dialysis to treat kidney failure. Your waiting time will be the same at each transplant program where you list, as long as each program has the same information about when you started dialysis.

If you are listed for any other organ type, your waiting time at each hospital will start from the date that program listed you. The longest amount of time you have waited at any hospital is called your primary waiting time.

OPTN policy allows you to transfer your primary waiting time to another hospital, or to switch time between programs. (For example, if you have waited 9 months at Hospital A and 6 months at Hospital B, you could switch to have 6 months at Hospital A and 9 months at Hospital B).

You are not allowed to add up or split your total waiting time among multiple hospitals. (Again, assume you have waited 9 months at Hospital A and 6 months at Hospital B. You could not assume you have 15 total months of waiting time and assign 5 months to Hospital A and 10 months to Hospital B.)

Any request to transfer or switch waiting time must be approved by the transplant programs(s) involved. Most transplant programs require a written request to swap or transfer waiting time, which will then be considered by the transplant team.

If I do not multiple-list but transfer my care to another hospital, what happens?

If you want to end your listing at one hospital and transfer to another, your primary waiting time can be transferred as long as you coordinate with both programs. The new transplant program will probably ask you to request in writing to transfer the waiting time. Keep in mind that if you end your listing at one program before another program formally accepts you, you may risk losing all previous waiting time.

Sometimes a transplant program may inactivate for a period of time, meaning it will not do any transplants while it is making some change. For example, a program may inactivate while it replaces a key member of the transplant team who leaves. In rare cases, a transplant program may

permanently close. If this happens, the OPTN requires that the program contact you and provide for your continuing care. If the inactivation is short-term you may choose to remain listed until the program becomes active again, but you will not receive organ offers during that time. If the program closes, the staff will work with you to arrange care at another hospital without loss of your primary waiting time.

Where can I get additional information?

You should first contact the staff of the transplant program where you are listed or want to be listed. They will have the most specific information about how they handle requests for multiple listing and/or waiting time transfer. They will also make any needed arrangements.

UNOS maintains a web site, Transplant Living, which contains extensive information for transplant candidates and recipients as well as their family members. The address is <https://transplantliving.org>. You may also wish to visit the OPTN web site at <https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov>.

A toll-free patient services line is available for transplant candidates, recipients, and family members. If you have questions or comments, contact the OPTN Patient Services line at **1-866-OPTN-411 (1-866-678-6411)** or submit them at: www.hrsa.gov/optn/contact-us.

Note to transplant candidates/family members:

In accordance with OPTN policy, your transplant hospital is required to provide you with written information about multiple listing and transferal of waiting time. If your hospital is providing you with this document, your signature below confirms that you have received it. Your hospital will keep this form on file to document compliance with this policy.

I have received the booklet *Frequently Asked Questions about Multiple Listing and Waiting Time Transfer*.

Transplant candidate/family member

Date received

Transplant candidate/family member (printed)

Transplant center staff providing booklet

*Our mission is to unite and strengthen the donation
and transplant community to save lives.*

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700 North 4th Street, Richmond, VA 23219

www.unos.org