

I can tell you what my child is able to do after the transplant.

Right after surgery your child may not have a lot of strength and energy for activities. Over time, this will improve.

What activities are good for my child?

After leaving the hospital, your child should bathe, get dressed, eat and walk every day. Walking every day will help your child get stronger. When your child is tired, he or she should take a nap.

What activities should my child not do?

For the first 6 weeks after the transplant, your child should not lift anything weighing more than 10 pounds. Your child should not do a lot of bending, stretching, or straining. Your child should not do things that bounce the body, like horseback riding, aerobics, motorcycle riding, or jogging.

When can my child participate in sports?

It can take 3 to 4 months for your child to fully heal from transplant surgery. After healing, if your child wants to start football, martial arts, wrestling, boxing, hockey, or lacrosse, ask your child's Transplant Team.

Can my child go swimming? Can my child go in a hot tub or Jacuzzi?

Children with IV lines or catheters that come out of the body cannot safely go into the water to swim or soak. Children with incisions that are still healing cannot go do this, either. When the tubes are out and the incision is healed, ask your child's transplant team if it is safe for your child to swim, go into a hot tub, or use a Jacuzzi.

Can my child drive?

If your child is legally able to drive, ask the transplant team if he or she is allowed to drive. Your child should never drive when taking medicine to treat pain. Your child must always wear a seatbelt when in a vehicle.

Can my child travel?

It is much easier to travel after a transplant.

- Always pack enough medicine.
- Always carry the medicine. Do not check it with baggage.
- Carry the name and number of your child's doctor and transplant team, and your child's medicine list and emergency card.
- If you plan to go to a country that requires immunizations, talk to the transplant team. Your child cannot get any live immunizations, such as varicella, measles, mumps, rubella, oral polio, yellow fever, or rotavirus.

Life after Liver Transplant

We expect your child to be able to enjoy a full and normal life after transplant.

Doctor visits

The Transplant Team and your child's doctor share information about your child. Take your child to the doctor for a check up every year, so the doctor can see how your child is doing. Your child will continue to see the Transplant Team often in the first year, and then twice a year for follow-up and changes in medicines and doses.

Returning to school

Your child's immune system is weakest for the first 3 months after transplant, when the doses of immunosuppression medicines are highest. This puts your child at greater risk for infections. Your child should not return to school until the doses of these medicines are lowered, 3 months after the transplant.

Once your child is back in school, ask the school to let you know right away when there is an infection, like chicken pox or measles, going around. When this happens, take your child home right away and keep your child out of school until the infections have stopped spreading.

Sports

For the first 3 months after transplant your child should not lift anything heavy or play contact sports. Ask the Transplant Team if it is safe for your child to begin an activity or sport before starting.

Housekeeping

- Keep your home clean.
- Give your child chores that do not increase risk of infection.

Public places

In the first 3 months after transplant, your child should wear a mask in public places. Avoid all contact with sick people. Sick friends and family should not visit.

Medical Alert Identification Tags

In case of emergency, your child should wear a Medical Alert Identification Tag. This is usually worn on the neck or wrist. This tag tells emergency workers that your child has received a liver transplant. It also lists:

- Medical conditions your child has
- Allergies your child has
- The telephone number to the Transplant Center.

Ask your Transplant Coordinator how you can order these tags.

Pets

Here is how you can keep your child safe around pets:

Keep clean

- Your child should not have any contact with an animal's body fluids, like saliva or urine.
- Don't let an animal lick your child's wound or face.

Litter box care

- After transplant, your child should never clean the litter box.
- Keep the box away from kitchen and places where people eat.
- Clean the litter box at least once each month with bleach.

Animal bites

- If your child is bit by an animal, rinse the wound in cold water right away and put on Neosporin or Bacitracin. Then call your child's doctor or the Transplant Team to find out what to do next.

Pets to avoid

Some types of pets carry germs that can spread to humans, which could cause serious illness or death to someone who has had a transplant. Your child should keep away from stray animals, reptiles like turtles and snakes, birds, monkeys, and other wild animals.

Travel

Your child's immune system is weakest for the first 3 months after transplant, when the doses of immunosuppression medicines are highest. This puts your child at greater risk for infections. Your child should not travel during this time. Complications are more likely to occur in these first three months, so your child should be close to home.

Tell your Transplant Team if you are planning a trip. Travel outside of the United States may require extra precautions and vaccinations. When away from home, make sure you have enough medicine for your child for the whole trip. You may not be able to get medicine from a pharmacy when traveling. Your Transplant Coordinator can help you plan for a safe trip.

Skin care

Some of the medicines your child takes after transplant can make your child's skin more likely to burn in the sun and get skin cancer. Your child needs to wear sunscreen and a hat when outside. If you notice a new growth on your child's skin, ask your child's doctor to check it.

Moving away

If you move away from here, we can tell you what pediatric liver transplant center is near your new home. We can send them your child's records and work with them so your child will continue to get care. As soon as you know you are moving, tell the Transplant Team.

Becoming an adult

After the age of 18, your child is an adult. He or she can then be followed by an adult liver transplant team. Your child may move away. We will help your child learn to care for him or herself, and transfer medical records to the new team.

Public Education

Some family members may want to volunteer to teach others about transplants and the value of donating organs. Activities include:

- Handing out information at health fairs.
- Speaking to community groups and schools.
- Being interviewed for television, radio, newspaper, and magazines.

If you would like to learn more about this, contact the Donor Network of Arizona at 602-222-2200 or 1-800-943-6667

Reaching out

Your family may choose to write a letter to the donor family for the gift of life that your child received. If you decide to write a letter, it should be anonymous. You can give this letter to your Transplant Coordinator or social worker, who will send it to the procurement organization who will then forward it to the donor family.

Sometimes a donor family may want to send you a message. Before we send this to you, we will ask if you want it. If you do not want to hear from the donor family, let us know.

Disclaimer

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.