

Caregiver Role and Post-Transplant Guidelines

Heart Transplant

One of the most important parts of a successful transplant is having a good plan for post-transplant care and assistance. It is important to have caregivers and a plan in place to assist the patient in his/her recovery after transplant surgery. To assist in making these arrangements the following is a list of post-transplant expectations and guidelines:

Who can be a part of the Caregiver Plan:

- It can be more than one person
- Different people can fulfill different roles and duties
- Paid staff/agencies can be used to supplement and support family and friends
- Assisted living/personal care home staff
- Having backup caregivers is encouraged

Majority of patients receiving a heart transplant will be discharged home with Home Health services when released from the hospital

- Although unlikely, a Rehab stay may be needed

Once discharged, patients will need to stay within 2 hours of the transplant hospital

- Even if you live less than 2 hours from the hospital there is always a possibility that you could be asked to stay closer to the hospital by the Transplant Team

Patients will need a caregiver plan to assist with their needs for 6 to 8 weeks after surgery

- Patients may require continuous supervision the first week after discharge
- Patients will need someone to be available to stay with them for a few weeks after discharge
- Patients will need transportation to and from follow-up appointments until cleared to drive by the physician
 - Average is 4 to 6 weeks for driving clearance
 - Weekly follow-up visits for the first 4 weeks after transplant but this could change depending on the patient's recovery
- Patients may also need assistance with:
 - Activities of daily living (bathing, dressing, etc)
 - Grocery shopping
 - Household chores
 - Meal preparation
 - Errands
 - Medication administration
 - Transportation for lab draws