

FAQs for transplant recipients and candidates – COVID-19

Is it safe to have a transplant during the COVID-19 pandemic?

A transplant can save a life, but it also weakens the immune system, making the person more likely to get sick from things like the Coronavirus. All organ donors are being tested for COVID-19, but the virus spreads easily. That's why transplant teams across Canada are being very careful and will only do a transplant if they feel it is right and safe for the patient. Talk to your transplant team if you have more questions.

Can I get COVID-19 from an organ transplant?

So far there are no reported cases of someone getting COVID-19 from a transplant, however, there is still a lot that is not known about how the virus spreads. Potential organ donors are tested for COVID-19, and if they test positive they will not be able to donate.

Is it safe to be a living organ donor during the COVID-19 pandemic?

To protect both donors and the patients who need transplants, most living organ donations are on hold until it's safe to start again. If a patient needs a transplant urgently, doctors will proceed if it is safe to do so.

Are all transplants on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic?

No. When it is safe and possible, organ transplants are still being done. Each case is looked at one by one and will only go ahead if it is safe and possible.

If transplants aren't happening, are they throwing away all the organs?

If a transplant cannot happen, donation procedures may not take place.

I'm on a waitlist, will I still get a transplant?

During COVID-19, Canada's transplant programs are looking at each case one by one and will only go ahead if it is safe and possible. After having a transplant your immune system is weak, making you more likely to get sick. Your transplant physician can advise on whether a transplant is appropriate during the pandemic.

Will patients lose their place on the waitlist if delays or cancellations continue?

When the pandemic is under control and transplantation returns to normal, patients will keep their place on the waitlist. Until that time, transplant programs will have to weigh the risks and benefits of who can safely be transplanted when an organ becomes available.

Am I going to die waiting for a transplant?

This is a stressful and anxious time for people who are waiting for a transplant or who have received a transplant. Please continue to protect yourself and your loved ones by strictly following the physical distancing and self-isolation measures put in place by public health officials. If you have questions or concerns about your health, please contact your health care team.

What steps can I take to ensure my safety? To protect myself?

To stay safe and healthy, everyone is urged to practice protective physical distancing. Avoid contact with others and stay home when possible. We recommend patients contact their transplant program or their local public health office. Follow their latest advice and reach out to your program if you have any questions or concerns.

How long will this last?

Medical professionals are constantly looking at the risks of COVID-19. As soon as it is safe for donors and for patients, things will return to normal. This is a stressful and anxious time. Please continue to

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Where do I go for more information?

If you have questions or concerns about your health, please contact your transplant program. For general information related to COVID-19, please visit [the Public Health Agency of Canada's information page](#).