

## Lung Transplant

Lung transplantation is a well-established surgical procedure for some individuals with end stage lung disease, including CF. Australia's lung transplant program has a good survival rate; 70% of those transplanted will live for more than five years. There are four centres performing lung transplantation in Australia including one paediatric service in Melbourne.

Lung transplantation does have some risks and not all transplants are successful. It is important to consider the benefits and risks and have an honest discussion about your expectations with your CF team and the transplant team.

### Evaluation for Transplant

If you decide to be assessed for transplant you will be referred to the lung transplant team. The assessment process for transplant involves many tests such as lung, heart and kidney function, bone scans, blood tests, and exercise testing. You will also undergo a psychiatric assessment and social work consultation.

These assessments should be performed before your condition deteriorates to the point where transplantation is required. Transplant will not be appropriate for everyone. If this is the case the transplant team will discuss alternative treatments with you.

### Waiting

Once you have completed the transplant evaluation process you will be placed on the waiting list. The waiting time



varies and could be weeks, months or even more than a year. Finding an appropriate donor is complex due to strict compatibility criteria including blood type, size, and antibody screening. These tests are important to ensure that the new lungs function well and are not rejected by your immune system.

While you are on the waitlist you will need to live within two hours of the transplant centre. You may be eligible for financial assistance to relocate from rural areas or interstate.

It is important to stay as healthy as you can while waiting for your transplant. You will have appointments with the transplant team every four to eight weeks, depending on your needs. Some centres require patients to participate in an exercise program. You must attend all your appointments. Patient adherence is an important component in the transplant process.

## The Operation

Individuals with CF will have both lungs transplanted; this is known as a bilateral lung transplant. The transplant is performed by an experienced team and takes 4-10 hours depending on how difficult it is to remove your lungs and insert the new ones. You will then be moved to intensive care and be on a ventilator, with chest drains, an epidural and a number of intravenous lines. Once you are breathing on your own and doctors are happy with your progress, you will be transferred to a ward. Most people are in hospital for approximately three weeks after the operation.

## Post-Transplant Care

After the operation, you will need to take immunosuppressive medications for life to prevent organ rejection. It is important that you develop a routine for taking all your medications at the correct time and dosage, as failing to take medications is a common cause of transplant failure. You will also be on medications and antibiotics to prevent and control the common infections that transplant patients are susceptible to. For the first few months after you leave hospital, frequent monitoring is required to identify problems early. It is important to do your daily lung function testing so infection or rejection can be identified and treated early.

It is important to remember that even though you have had a transplant, you still have CF in your other organs and will need to continue your treatment regime to minimise the risk of CF-related complications.

After transplant, many people enjoy a vast improvement in quality of life and enjoy activities they could previously not have done.

## CFWA Support

CFWA can offer the following supports. Please contact our Services Manager on 08 6224 4100 or [sam.wallace@cfwa.org.au](mailto:sam.wallace@cfwa.org.au) for more information.

### Pre-Transplant:

- Exercise support
- Fortnightly cleaning packages
- Portable oxygen concentrator
- Counselling
- Individual peer support

### Post-Transplant

- Exercise support
- Short term cleaning package
- Annual post-transplant peer support event
- Counselling
- Individual peer support

## Useful Resources

- [Transplant Stories \(CFWA\)](#)
- [Heart and Lung Transplant Foundation](#)
- [CFWA factsheets](#)

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[www.cfwaw.org.au](http://www.cfwaw.org.au)

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