LUNG TRANSPLANT
PATIENT RESOURCES

WHAT TO EXPECT
When referred to UAB Medicine for a lung transplant, you will have an initial consult appointment with our transplant pulmonologist. If, at this appointment, it is determined that lung transplant is an option, you will then be scheduled for 3-5 days of outpatient testing. If you are hospitalized and too ill to be seen as an outpatient, your local doctor can discuss your case with UAB physicians. This doctor-to-doctor communication may lead to your transfer to UAB Hospital for an inpatient evaluation.

Whether performed on an inpatient or outpatient basis, some or all of the following tests may be scheduled as part of your evaluation. Other tests may be needed later as a follow-up to the initial results.

POSSIBLE EVALUATION TESTS

BLOOD AND URINE TESTS will rule out certain infectious diseases and will measure:
- Various blood counts, such as white and red cells and platelets
- Blood type
- Blood chemistry, including tests to evaluate kidney and liver function
- The presence of viruses and/or viral antibodies. Exposure to some common viruses will not prohibit lung transplantation but could influence your post-transplantation care. In some cases vaccination prior to transplant may be recommended.
- Levels of various drugs, including nicotine and alcohol

CHEST AND SINUS X-RAYS to evaluate for fluid or signs of infection

ABDOMINAL ULTRASOUND to evaluate the liver and other abdominal organs and blood vessels

CHEST CT (CAT) SCAN to evaluate the size and shape of the heart and lungs and detect any lung lesions or tumors

PULMONARY FUNCTION TEST (PFT) requires breathing forcefully into a tube to measure how well the lungs are working and the ability of the blood to carry oxygen.

ARTERIAL BLOOD GAS (ABG) test requires that a small syringe of blood be drawn from the artery in your wrist

VQ SCAN to measure the air and blood flow in the lungs

ELECTROCARDIOGRAM (EKG) shows heart rhythm and may reveal past damage

ECHOCARDIOGRAM (ECHO) shows the function of heart valves, measures pressure in the pulmonary artery, and determines the sizes of the heart chambers

RIGHT AND/OR LEFT HEART CATHETERIZATION to evaluate for coronary artery disease or other abnormality

SIX-MINUTE WALK TEST to measure exercise tolerance

DEXA SCAN to evaluate density and health of bones
DENTAL EVALUATION to evaluate risk of infection or need for restorative work prior to transplant

ADDITIONAL HEART TESTING may be required if you have a history of heart or vascular disease or significant risk factors for hidden or silent heart disease

DISCUSSIONS WITH THE TEAM

INTERVIEWS with a transplant social worker, neuropsychologist, nutritionist, and transplant nurse coordinator help determine how you and your family cope with stress. You will learn more about financial costs and resources available to transplant recipients.

CONSULTATIONS with a lung transplant surgeon and a pulmonologist (lung specialist) allow the physicians to talk with you about your medical history, discuss the lung transplantation process, and answer any questions you and your family may have.

THESE TESTS AND DISCUSSIONS HELP THE UAB TRANSPLANT TEAM DETERMINE IF:

- A transplant is right for you at this time;
- There are any problems, such as closed blood vessels, that could complicate your surgery;
- You are physically able to undergo transplant surgery;
- There are emotional, psychological, or family issues that should be addressed.

These tests and interviews will help the UAB transplant team determine the best way to maximize your chances of achieving the best results in treating your lung disease. The transplant team meets weekly to review patients’ evaluation results. You will be notified of the committee’s recommendations approximately 7-10 days after you complete your evaluation, and you also will receive a letter containing this information.