

How to Access A Lung Transplant in Canada

Provincial Resources

Information compiled by



**Canadian
Pulmonary Fibrosis
Foundation**

How to Access a Lung Transplant in Canada

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How to Access a Lung Transplant in Canada

British Columbia & Yukon

Resources

[Lung Transplant in BC](#)

[BC Lung Transplant Referral Form](#)

Transplantation Program

Vancouver General Hospital – BC Transplant Society

Process

Step 1 – Pre-Assessment

While a lung transplant is a major operation that can involve many complications, it can improve your health and quality of life. Every potential lung transplant patient must be carefully assessed. The assessment phase starts when your specialist refers you to the Lung Transplant Team.

Step 2 – Eligibility

To be eligible for a lung transplant, you must be a BC resident with a Personal Care Card Number and be referred by your lung specialist to the Lung Transplant Team at Vancouver General Hospital.

Once referred, you will undergo a variety of physical and psychological tests and examinations. You should be well informed about your disease and demonstrate good health behaviour and a commitment to follow health care guidelines.

The routine assessment includes consultation with the members of the transplant team comprised of a respirologist, transplant surgeon, clinical coordinator, social worker, dietitian and psychologist. If required, appointments will also be arranged with specialists from other disciplines.

Step 3 – Transplant & Post-Op Care

Following surgery, you'll be closely monitored for infection and rejection of your new lungs. You'll also be required to take various medications as a preventative measure against common infections and rejection. These medications are covered by BC Transplant with your valid BC Care Card Number.

For more information on managing your care, including the medications that are covered, please [visit our Medications page](#).

Note: A Yukon resident would be referred to the BC lung transplant program by their Yukon physician/specialist. There are arrangements in place for inter-provincial billing between the Yukon and BC.

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Alberta & Northwest Territories

Resources

[Lung Transplant in AB & NWT](#)

[Lung Transplant in AB & NWT - Programs & Services](#)

[Lung Transplant Support - Alberta Lung & NWT](#)

[Covid-19 & Lung Transplant Recipients/Potential Recipients - Alberta Lung & NWT](#)

Transplantation Program

University of Alberta Hospital – Edmonton Lung Transplant Program

Eligibility & Process

Patients are assessed by the lung transplant team using tests and interviews to see if they're good candidates for surgery. Clients are considered for a lung transplant or a heart - lung transplant if it's likely the surgery will help the person live longer and have a better quality of life.

Clients are assessed for:

- how urgent their need is
- health and medical history
- medical test results

Clients should:

- be able to follow a complex medical treatment plan
- be emotionally stable
- have social support
- have realistic attitudes about their illness and the transplant surgery

Physician referral is required. Healthcare providers should consult the [Alberta Referral Directory](#) for service referral information.

Once assessed and accepted for transplant, the waiting period for transplant varies dependent on donor availability and recipient match.

An estimated wait time will be provided at the time of appointment booking.

For more information, including the expenses that are covered, [please consult the Lung Transplant Information Guide](#).

How to Access a Lung Transplant in Canada

Manitoba

Resources

[Lung Transplant in Manitoba](#)

Transplantation Program

Transplant

University of Alberta Hospital - Edmonton Lung Transplant Program

Ongoing Care

Adult Respiratory Clinic at HSC Winnipeg

Eligibility & Process

1- Initial Consultation

Patients, who must be Manitoba residents, are referred to a transplant respirologist at HSC Winnipeg for a first appointment. This appointment determines if someone is able to go forward with the assessment phase. In general, suitability to continue to a full assessment is decided according to the [ISHLT Lung Transplant Referral Guidelines](#).

Physician to physician consults can be faxed to 204-787-8788.

2- Education Appointment

After the consultation, there is an Education Appointment. These sessions can be done individually or in a larger group setting.

3- Transplant Assessment

The Transplant Assessment is an in-depth process. Patients undergo a variety of medical tests and consultations to determine the suitability for lung transplant. The assessment can take weeks or even months to complete depending on any new medical issues or findings that testing uncovers. The assessments are usually done on an outpatient basis. Sometimes they are done as an inpatient.

Until the assessment is complete, lung transplant suitability cannot be determined. A patient cannot be listed for or receive a lung transplant without a full assessment.

4- Waiting List

After completion of the Transplant Assessment, patient files are reviewed by the Manitoba Lung Transplant Program to determine eligibility. If requirements are met, the patient becomes a candidate for referral to Edmonton.

The patient's information and results are then sent to the Edmonton Lung Transplant Program. Once received, there is a presentation and discussion of the case with the Edmonton Lung

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Transplant Program. If both programs agree that the patient is a good candidate, an offer is made to the patient to be put on the waitlist.

5- Being on the Wait List

After being accepted for transplantation, patients will meet with the lung transplant physiotherapist for an appropriate exercise program to keep the patient strong pre transplant.

Waiting for a transplant can be difficult. The wait can range from weeks to years, and depends on the availability and suitability of a donor organ, a patient's medical condition and how long a patient has been on the list.

While patients wait, they attend a transplant clinic every one to three months so lung function and overall health can be monitored. Every three months, a telehealth session is arranged with the Edmonton team with the patient and their support person. A yearly reassessment is done to make sure transplantation is still possible.

6- Transplant

Once suitable donor organs become available, **the patient is contacted by the Edmonton team and must travel immediately to Edmonton for the surgery.** After surgery and recovery, the patient returns to HSC Winnipeg to continue post-transplant care and follow-up. Post-transplant patients are regularly followed by the Adult Respiratory Clinic at HSC Winnipeg for ongoing care.

7- Costs Covered

Patient is responsible to pay for required prescriptions. The medications are covered under pharmacare, meaning once the deductible is met, pharmacare will begin to cover the costs.

Currently, the hospital ward covers the cost of the micro spirometer, although this may change in the future. The cost to replace one varies, between \$200-\$800. Private insurance plans have covered in the past with a prescription and if they have medical equipment coverage.

Patients also require a scale, BP machine and thermometer. These have been covered under private insurance in the past and can vary in cost as well, but usually much lower cost than the spirometer.

Our program does not cover costs for relocation to Winnipeg, if resides outside of the city, or travel costs to come to clinic. Program does not cover costs for support person in Edmonton in regards to accommodations or meals.

Manitoba Health only covers the support person's travel to accompany the patient to/from Edmonton. Other funding options gets explored with Social Work to assist with transplant expenses. However, if patients are covered under Employment Income Assistance or First Nations, the expenses of their support person are covered under those funding sources. Same with all medications and most medical equipment.

How to Access a Lung Transplant in Canada

Saskatchewan

Resources

[Lung Transplant in Saskatchewan](#)

Transplantation Program

Transplant

University of Alberta Hospital - Edmonton Lung Transplant Program (majority)

Toronto General Hospital – Toronto Lung Transplant Program

Ongoing Care

Division of Respiriology, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine at University of Saskatchewan

Eligibility & Process

Saskatchewan is too small for a viable transplant program so most lung transplantation patients are sent to the [Edmonton program](#).

However, a respirologist from the [Division of Respiriology, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine](#) at the University of Saskatchewan, trained at the Edmonton transplant program and now conducts some of the pre- and post-lung transplant clinical work here in Saskatchewan which saves extra trips to Edmonton.

The Lung Association also supports lung transplant recipients by covering the costs of some of the important medical equipment needed for lung transplant patients. Find out more here: [Lung Transplant Funding/Support](#). (information only available to those with membership to the Saskatchewan Lung Association)

How to Access a Lung Transplant in Canada

Ontario

Resources

[Lung Transplant in Ontario - UHN](#)

[Ontario Lung Transplant Referral Form](#)

[Lung Transplant Patient Manual - UHN](#)

[Family & Caregiver Lung Transplant Guide - UHN](#)

Transplantation Program

Toronto General Hospital – Toronto Lung Transplant Program

Eligibility & Process

Please note that only physicians may send a referral. Please complete the referral form and obtain the [required tests and documents](#). Once complete, email the package to the Transplant Assessment Office at lungtxreferral@uhn.ca or fax it to 416 340 4044, attention Lung Transplant Program.

For urgent referrals, please contact the Lung Transplant physician on-call through Toronto General Hospital paging, at 416 340 3155.

Patients who may benefit from lung transplantation are initially seen by a doctor in the Lung Transplant Clinic to discuss lung transplantation as a treatment option. If appropriate, a full assessment then takes place to see if transplantation would be a good treatment.

Transplant candidates and their family members are provided with information, so they can make an informed decision about whether transplant surgery is the right option for them. Patients continue to visit the Lung Transplant Clinic while they are on the waiting list, and receive specialized care from our team in the Lung Transplant Clinic after their lung transplants.

Someone will call you to give you a time for your first appointment at the Lung Transplant Clinic. Patients referred for consultation usually complete pulmonary function tests and a six-minute walk test at each clinic visit. Please wear comfortable clothing and shoes for the 6-minute walk test.

If you require oxygen, please make sure you bring enough for travel to and from the hospital. Oxygen can be provided while you are in clinic; please discuss this with the receptionist.

For the expenses that are covered, [please consult the UHN Lung Transplant Patient Manual](#).

How to Access a Lung Transplant in Canada

Quebec

Resources

Transplantation Program

Centre Hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal – Notre Dame

Eligibility & Process

No information available online.

Please contact your physician or [Transplant Québec](#) for information.

How to Access a Lung Transplant in Canada

New Brunswick

Resources

[Lung Transplant in New Brunswick](#)

[Lung Transplant Guide: Information for New Brunswick Residents](#)

Transplantation Program

Toronto General Hospital – Toronto Lung Transplant Program (predominantly)

University of Alberta Hospital - Edmonton Lung Transplant Program

Centre Hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal – Notre Dame

Eligibility & Process

Your family doctor may be the first to consider the possibility that you need a lung transplant. Because you have severe lung disease, you have likely been to see a lung specialist called a respirologist. Your family doctor or respirologist will send information to the transplant centre and ask the specialists there to decide if you are a good candidate for this treatment.

The majority of people in New Brunswick who need lung transplants go to Toronto, but a referral can be made to any transplant centre in Canada. New Brunswick Medicare will pay for the surgery as long as it is done in a publicly-funded Canadian hospital.

The path to getting on the waiting list may differ slightly between transplant centres, but the following section describes the general steps that will take place.

“First Meeting”

Once the specialists at the transplant centre receive your medical information from your doctor or respirologist, they arrange to have a preliminary or “first-step” meeting with you. This first meeting is to learn more about your medical history and how committed you are to doing all that is necessary to have a lung transplant, both before and after the surgery. You will also get more information about what happens before, during, and after the transplant.

The team will ask if you have a support person or team, and if you have a plan for funding expenses during the waiting time. This first meeting may be done by a teleconference if you live far from the transplant centre. The transplant team prefers that you have a family member and/or support person with you at this meeting. Write down your questions before the meeting so you will not forget what you wanted to ask.

“Assessment”

If the transplant specialists believe that you could be a good candidate, they will ask you and your support person to come to the centre where you will have extensive tests. This takes about a week to do and include tests that check over all your body’s major systems, including your

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heart, lungs, liver, kidney, and bone strength. The staff at the transplant centre will explain how the tests are done and what they mean once you are at the centre.

If a patient is required by the hospital to stay as an out-patient in a city outside of NB during the assessment period for 3 nights or longer, and come in for scheduled work-up, tests, therapy etc., they and an escort qualify for accommodation expenses during that period and in accordance with the Medicare Hostel Policy.

You are encouraged to ask lots of questions and you may have a chance to meet with other candidates who are waiting for a transplant when you are at the transplant centre.

“The Final Stage”

Once all the tests have been looked at, the transplant team will decide if you would be a good candidate for the surgery. If everything looks good, they will call you to ask if you would like to go on the waiting list. This call may be a month or two after you have been through all the tests.

If you agree to go on the list, you will need to move with your support person to the city where the transplant centre is. Once you have moved, you will meet with the transplant surgeon and sign all the necessary consent forms to be placed on the list.

You should consider moving as soon as possible.

For your own safety, there may be things that the transplant team will ask you to do before you can be placed on the list. Examples include having dental work done or losing weight.

“Post-Op Care”

After the transplant, the patient may be required by the hospital to stay in the city where the transplant was made to receive follow-up services on an out-patient basis.

Once you have gone home to New Brunswick, you will have to travel back to the transplant centre for routine assessments:

- every three months during the first year after your transplant
- every six months during the second year
- once a year for the rest of your life

The testing will take 2-3 days so you will be staying at a hotel or other accommodation for 2 or 3 nights plus travelling by car, plane, or train, depending on the distance from your home to the transplant centre.

Monthly blood work and lung function tests will be done at a hospital in New Brunswick, so you may have some travel costs depending on where you live.

[For the expenses that are covered, please consult the New Brunswick Lung Transplant Guide.](#)

How to Access a Lung Transplant in Canada

Newfoundland & Labrador

Resources

[Lung Transplant Travel Assistance in NL](#)

[Lung Transplant Travel Assistance NL Application Form](#)

Transplantation Program

Toronto General Hospital – Toronto Lung Transplant Program

University of Alberta Hospital - Edmonton Lung Transplant Program

Centre Hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal – Notre Dame

Eligibility & Process

Newfoundland and Labrador residents who require a lung transplant must travel or relocate to a city with a lung transplantation program.

The Lung Transplant Travel Assistance Program is a program of The Lung Association Newfoundland and Labrador that is designed to offer modest support to individuals who have to travel out of province to receive a lung transplant.

In order to apply:

1. The applicant must complete an [application form](#).
2. The referring physician section must be completed and signed by the referring physician/specialized physician.
3. The completed form should then be sent to The Newfoundland & Labrador Lung Association.

The Lung Association Newfoundland and Labrador provides a modest financial contribution to patients awaiting a lung transplant. There may also be additional support for patients diagnosed with IPF through the Peggy Lewis memorial Fund.

All applications are reviewed on an individual basis. Once your application has been received, it will take 2-4 weeks for review of your application. If your application has been approved you should receive your bursary within 4-6 weeks upon receiving your application.

If you require further information you can contact:
The Lung Association Newfoundland and Labrador

P. O. Box 13457, Stn. A
St. John, NL A1B 4B8
Tel: (709) 726-4664

Fax: (709) 726-2550
Toll Free: 1-888-566-5864
Email: info@nf.lung.ca

Prince Edward Island & Nova Scotia

Resources

[Lung Transplant in Nova Scotia](#)

[Lung Transplant in PEI](#)

[Lung Transplant FAQ - Nova Scotia](#)

Transplantation Program

Transplant

Toronto General Hospital – Toronto Lung Transplant Program (predominantly)

University of Alberta Hospital - Edmonton Lung Transplant Program

Centre Hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal – Notre Dame

Ongoing Care

RRT Respiriology Clinic

Eligibility & Process

Individuals from Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia who require lung transplant surgery must relocate to Toronto for the procedure.

Dr. Meredith Chiasson and Dr. Nancy Morrison at the NSHA, work closely with Erin McAndrew, RRT Respiriology Clinic, to assess patients with advanced lung disease pre-transplantation and provide follow-up care post-lung transplantation in collaboration with the patients' lung transplantation center (predominantly Toronto).

Individuals from Nova Scotia who require lung transplant surgery must relocate to Toronto for the procedure. To be approved for out of province travel the patient must have a signed physician's recommendation. For more information on Out of Province procedures, air travel and transplant information please consult [these documents](#). Should you have any questions please call our toll-free number 1-888-566-5864 for more information.

You can apply to receive this financial assistance one time per month at a maximum of \$1,500CAD for accommodation costs and \$1,000CAD for travel costs.

[Prince Edward Island Out of Province Travel and Accommodation Expense Claim Form](#)

[Nova Scotia Out of Province Travel and Accommodation Expense Claim Form](#)