

# How to Access Lung Transplants in Canada

Comment accéder à la transplantation pulmonaire au Canada

**Provincial Resources / Ressources provinciales**

Information compiled by / Information compilée par



# 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 - Programs & Services](#)

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

[Lung Transplant Support – Alberta Lung](#)

#### 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 depending on donor availability and recipient match.

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

#### Alberta Lung Support

Alberta Lung provides much needed support for those undergoing transplant, including gift cards for accommodation, gas, parking and groceries to help take off some of that pressure. This support is funded entirely by individual donors who care about the health and security of those going through a transplant.

Due to funding constraints, only ONE application per household will be accepted.

# 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 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

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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.

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### 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)

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### 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](mailto: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](#).*



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### Quebec (English)

#### Resources

[Quebec Transplant Centres](#)

#### 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.

### Québec (Français)

#### Ressources

[Centres de transplantation du Québec](#)

#### Programme de transplantation

Centre Hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal – Notre Dame

#### Admissibilité et processus

Aucune information n'est disponible en ligne.

Veillez communiquer avec votre médecin ou [Transplant Québec](#) pour obtenir de l'information.

### New Brunswick (English)

#### Resources

[Lung Transplant in New Brunswick](#)

#### 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 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.

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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.

### NB Lung Support

NB Lung’s Lung Transplant Support Fund is available to New Brunswick residents to help offset costs that are not covered by Medicare. Please contact us to learn more.

## Nouveau-Brunswick (Français)

### Ressources

[Transplantation pulmonaire au Nouveau-Brunswick](#)

### Programme de transplantation

Hôpital général de Toronto – Programme de transplantation pulmonaire de Toronto (principalement)

Hôpital de l'Université de l'Alberta - Programme de transplantation pulmonaire d'Edmonton

Centre Hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal – Notre Dame

### Admissibilité et processus

Votre médecin de famille pourrait être le premier à envisager la possibilité que vous ayez besoin d'une greffe de poumon. Parce que vous avez une maladie pulmonaire grave, vous avez probablement été voir un pneumologue appelé un pneumologue. Votre médecin de famille ou votre pneumologue enverra de l'information au centre de transplantation et demandera aux spécialistes qui s'y trouvent de décider si vous êtes un bon candidat pour ce traitement.

**La majorité des personnes au Nouveau-Brunswick qui ont besoin d'une greffe de poumon vont à Toronto, mais un renvoi peut être fait à n'importe quel centre de transplantation au Canada.** L'assurance-maladie du Nouveau-Brunswick paiera pour la chirurgie tant qu'elle sera effectuée dans un hôpital canadien financé par l'État.

Le cheminement vers l'accès à la liste d'attente peut différer légèrement entre les centres de transplantation, mais la section suivante décrit les étapes générales qui auront lieu.

#### « Première réunion »

Une fois que les spécialistes du centre de transplantation ont reçu vos renseignements médicaux de votre médecin ou de votre pneumologue, ils prennent des dispositions pour avoir une réunion préliminaire ou « de première étape » avec vous. Cette première rencontre vise à en apprendre davantage sur vos antécédents médicaux et à quel point vous êtes engagé à faire tout ce qui est nécessaire pour avoir une greffe de poumon, à la fois avant et après la chirurgie. Vous obtiendrez également plus d'informations sur ce qui se passe avant, pendant et après la greffe.

L'équipe vous demandera si vous avez une personne ou une équipe de soutien et si vous avez un plan pour les dépenses de financement pendant le temps d'attente. Cette première rencontre peut se faire par téléconférence si vous habitez loin du centre de transplantation. L'équipe de transplantation préfère que vous ayez un membre de la famille et / ou une personne de soutien avec vous lors de cette réunion. Écrivez vos questions avant la réunion afin de ne pas oublier ce que vous vouliez demander.

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### « Évaluation »

Si les spécialistes de la transplantation croient que vous pourriez être un bon candidat, ils vous demanderont, à vous et à votre personne de soutien, de venir au centre où vous passerez des tests approfondis. Cela prend environ une semaine à faire et comprend des tests qui vérifient tous les principaux systèmes de votre corps, y compris votre cœur, poumons, foie, rein, et la solidité des os. Le personnel du centre de transplantation vous expliquera comment les tests sont effectués et ce qu'ils signifient une fois que vous êtes au centre.

Si un patient est tenu par l'hôpital de rester en tant que patient externe dans une ville à l'extérieur du N.-B. pendant la période d'évaluation durant 3 nuits ou plus, et de venir pour une préparation prévue, des tests, une thérapie, etc., lui et une escorte sont admissibles aux frais d'hébergement pendant cette période et conformément à la politique de l'auberge Medicare.

Nous vous encourageons à poser beaucoup de questions et vous pourriez avoir l'occasion de rencontrer d'autres candidats qui attendent une greffe lorsque vous êtes au centre de transplantation.

### « L'étape finale »

Une fois que tous les tests ont été examinés, l'équipe de transplantation décidera si vous seriez un bon candidat pour la chirurgie. Si tout semble bien, ils vous appelleront pour vous demander si vous souhaitez aller sur la liste d'attente. Cet appel peut être un mois ou deux après que vous ayez passé tous les tests.

Si vous acceptez de vous inscrire sur la liste, vous devrez déménager avec votre personne de soutien dans la ville où se trouve le centre de transplantation. Une fois que vous avez déménagé, vous rencontrerez le chirurgien transplanté et signerez tous les formulaires de consentement nécessaires pour être placé sur la liste.

***Vous devriez envisager de déménager dès que possible.***

Pour votre propre sécurité, il peut y avoir des choses que l'équipe de transplantation vous demandera de faire avant que vous puissiez être placé sur la liste. Les exemples incluent des travaux dentaires à effectuer ou la perte de poids.

### « Soins post opératoires »

Après la greffe, le patient peut être tenu par l'hôpital de rester dans la ville où la greffe a été faite pour recevoir des services de suivi sur une base ambulatoire.

Une fois que vous serez rentré chez vous au Nouveau-Brunswick, vous devrez retourner au centre de transplantation pour des évaluations de routine :

1. tous les trois mois au cours de la première année suivant votre greffe
2. tous les six mois au cours de la deuxième année
3. une fois par an pour le reste de votre vie

Le test prendra 2-3 jours, vous séjournerez donc dans un hôtel ou un autre hébergement pendant 2 ou 3 nuits en plus de voyager en voiture, en avion ou en train, selon la distance entre

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votre domicile et le centre de transplantation.

Des analyses sanguines et des tests de la fonction pulmonaire mensuels seront effectués dans un hôpital du Nouveau-Brunswick, de sorte que vous pourriez avoir des frais de déplacement selon l'endroit où vous vivez.

### Soutien de Poumon NB.

Le Fonds de soutien à la transplantation pulmonaire de Poumon NB est mis à la disposition des résidents du Nouveau-Brunswick pour aider à compenser les coûts qui ne sont pas couverts par l'assurance-maladie. Veuillez nous contacter pour en savoir plus.

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### Newfoundland & Labrador

#### Resources

[NL Medical Transportation Programs](#)

[NL Traveling for Medical Services Brochure](#)

[NL Medical Transportation Assistance Program 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 Medical Transportation Assistance Program (MTAP) provides financial assistance to beneficiaries of the Medical Care Plan (MCP) who incur substantial out-of-pocket travel costs to access specialized insured medical services which are not available in their immediate area of residence and / or within the Province.

MCP beneficiaries required to travel for specialized insured medical services may be eligible to apply for financial assistance under MTAP for airfare (and related eligible taxi fares); private vehicle usage; purchased registered and private accommodations (and related meal allowance); busing and use of ferries based on program criteria (deductibles may apply).

#### **Claims must be submitted via mail or email with the required supporting documentation and official receipts for allowable expenses to:**

Medical Transportation Assistance Program  
Department of Labrador Affairs  
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador  
P.O. Box 8700 St. John's, NL  
A1B 4J6

[mtap@gov.nl.ca](mailto:mtap@gov.nl.ca)

For more information about the Medical Transportation Assistance Program, call 1-877-475-2412.

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### Prince Edward Island & Nova Scotia

#### Resources

[Lung Transplant in Nova Scotia and PEI](#)

#### 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).

To help cover the costs of travelling out-of-province, LungNSPEI offers modest financial support to help families deal with the extra costs of travel & living expenses while waiting for a lung transplant out-of-province. Residents of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island who are awaiting a lung transplant are eligible to apply for a one-time \$1500 travel assistance grant. This can either be applied for when relocating for the transplant operation or when required to go for assessment.

How do I apply for the Lung Transplant Support Fund?

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 LungNSPEI

For additional information around the Lung Transplant Support Program, call 902.443.8141 or email [info@lungnspei.ca](mailto:info@lungnspei.ca).