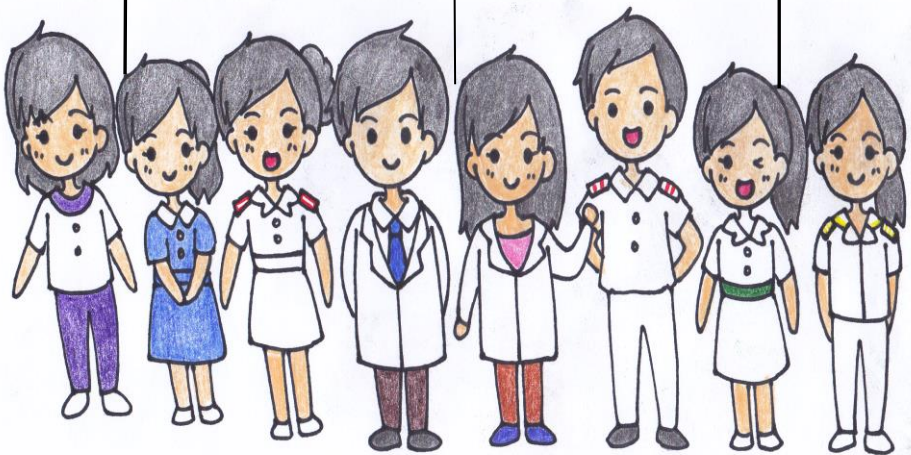


Post Liver Transplant Patient Care



General information after liver transplantation

1) In Intensive Care Unit

After a 10- hour liver transplant operation, **you will be transferred to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) for meticulous management.** Doctors of Liver Transplant Team will continue to take care of your treatment.

The first couple of days after the operation are most critical. **You will be connected to some monitoring equipment, drainage, arterial or venous catheters, or a ventilator, etc.** The medical staff will observe and evaluate your condition with the help of the monitoring equipment. Generally, you will stay and be monitored in ICU for 2-3 days, or longer. When your condition is stabilized, you will be transferred to the Liver Transplant Centre for further management and observation. Doctors will monitor your progress every day and decide on your transfer.

2) In Liver Transplant Centre

Return to General Ward

During your stay in ward, you should follow the advice and guidance of the medical and nursing staff. Don't be anxious and upset. Support and encouragement from family and friends will contribute to your recovery.



Liver Transplant Centre

Post operation wound pain management

You will have patient control analgesia (PCA) for pain control through intravenous after operation. Then doctors and anesthetists will prescribe oral or intramuscular medications regularly. You can also ask the medical and nursing staff for the medications or further information if needed.

Post operation blood checking

After the transplant, **you will have blood checking every day. You should follow instructions given by nursing staff and take FK506 or Sirolimus, etc. after blood taking.** Doctors will correct drug level daily by adjust the drug dosage accordingly and assess your recovery progress.

Post operation diet

After the operation, doctors will advise you to resume a regular diet as soon as possible to obtain adequate nutrition. When you first resume diet, you will experience loss of appetite, nausea, flatulence, or even vomiting. This is probably because the residual effects of anesthesia and slow bowel movement after the surgery. You will recover in a few days and your appetite will gradually improve. **We recommend you to reduce the regular meal size and eat between regular meals. Do not get too full and avoid taking a lot of liquid before and after meals.** The nurse will arrange you clean diet and drinking water, see figure 1, so family does not need to bring you food. Dietitian will also see you and design the postoperative eating plan.



Figure 1: Post liver transplant clean diet and water

Post operation care and exercise

Apart from obtaining sufficient nutrition and taking medications at specific times, mild exercise is essential for recovery. In the first few days after surgery, you should get out of bed and sit on chair for at least 1-2 hours every day. Please do more deep breathing exercise because it helps your lungs to expand and enables you to cough up sputum easily or use your self-financed breathing exerciser (see figure 2).



Figure 2: Breathing exerciser

Besides, the physiotherapist will teach you to exercise your legs by cycling, see figure 3, so that your leg muscles can be strengthened, blood circulation is increased, and the risk of complications such as venous thrombosis of the legs is reduced. The level of exercise, e.g. walking, can be increased progressively.



Figure 3: Bike: for limb exercise

Financial difficulty

The medical social worker can provide assistance if needed. Please contact our ward nurse.

Foot drop

If it occurs, the occupational therapist will design you a pair of splints to maintain the foot curvature and prevent the condition from getting worse, see figure 4.



Figure 4: Foot splints

Guide to daily hygiene

1) Personal hygiene

Personal hygiene is essential before and after operation. A daily shower or bath keeps your skin clean and prevents growth of bacteria. If you worry that the wound will get wet in bath or shower, we recommend you to clean your body with a wet towel and change clothes that are in close contact with the body every day during hospitalization with the help of your family or hospital healthcare assistants. When the wound heals and the staples are removed, you will be able to bathe or shower as usual. Remember to dry the gaps in an incision and keep the incision dry and clean. If **there is oozing from the wound or you suspect an infection, please contact the doctors immediately.**

If you find your skin dry, you may use a mild bathing lotion and apply moisturizing lotion after bath or shower.

Also, it is important to keep your home clean. Clean your home regularly (e.g. once a week), to eliminate pest and prevent infection. In addition, you can use 1:99 bleach to clean your toilet and water channels.



2) Quit smoking and drinking

Please do not smoke and drink. Smoking damages your lung and predisposes you to chest infection.

Alcohol harms the liver further. Please quit drinking.



3) Avoid crowded public places

In the first 3 months after liver transplantation, you should avoid visiting crowded public places like cinemas, restaurants and department stores, etc. If it cannot be avoided, please wear mask and perform hand hygiene in public places. We suggest your friends and relatives to wear masks if they want to visit you in the first 3 months after liver transplantation.

Avoid contact with animals and birds to prevent infection.

4) Exercise and social activity

During your recuperation period or the first few weeks after hospital discharge, you will feel tired easily. Please do more deep breathing exercise and take more rest. Sometimes you will find weakness in the muscles all over your body, and leg muscles in particular. This is a result of a lack of exercise after surgery and a side effect of steroid. To strengthen the leg muscles, you are recommended to progressively increase the level of exercise. Walking, cycling and working out on exercise bikes are good choices.

If you feel any discomfort during exercise, like shortness of breath, dizziness, chest pain, tachycardia or palpitations, please stop your exercise immediately and have rest. If the situation does not improve, you can seek advice from your doctor.

Exercise can improve your muscle strength, reduce side effects of some drugs and prevent constipation. However, **in the first three months after liver transplantation, you should avoid heavy lifting work and vigorous exercise.** Basically, you can do whatever you want to do gradually, including sit-ups, abdominal exercises and swimming, which help to tighten abdominal muscles, and flatten your tummy. We encourage you to return to school or work as soon as possible, but in the first 3 months of recuperation, please seek advice from the doctors and consider your health condition before making a decision.

If you plan on a trip to a foreign country, please seek advice from your Transplant Team doctors first.



5) Dental care

After liver transplantation, you should beware of oral hygiene and keep your teeth healthy. Always brush your teeth and rinse your mouth after eating. If you receive dental care or dental treatment, **please let the dentist know that you are a liver transplant patient and that you are on immunosuppressant.**



6) **Pregnancy**

For female patients, menstruation may temporarily stop after surgery, but there is still a chance to get pregnant. Contraceptive methods should be practiced. You are advised to wait at least one year following transplantation before trying to conceive.

Immunosuppressant can interfere with the effects of certain kinds of oral contraceptive pills. If you would like to take oral contraceptive pills, please discuss with your doctor.

If you decide to have children, please discuss your plan with the Transplant Team doctors. Although a number of women are able to have children after liver transplantation with minimal risk to the mother and baby, pregnant transplant recipients will need to be closely followed.

7) **Avoid contacting patients with infectious diseases**

If your friends or relatives suffer from infectious diseases such as influenza and pneumonia, or in particular communicable diseases such as chicken pox and hepatitis, please avoid physical contact with them. If they are members of the household, they should take general precautions, for example, use separate tableware and utensils, and cover their mouth when coughing, etc. Also, it is important for you to wear mask and perform hand hygiene frequently too. However, it is still possible for you to be infected.

If you are infected, you should inform the Transplant Team doctors, who will give you advice and arrange necessary treatment.

Guide to follow up visits after liver transplantation

After discharge from the hospital, you are responsible for continuing appropriate treatments and cares according to the advice given by the Liver Transplant Team. After discharge, you will go to the Liver Transplant Clinic on 4/F, Block S, Specialist Clinic, Queen Mary Hospital for routine follow-ups as scheduled. **If you notice obvious abnormality in your body, please report to the Liver Transplant Team** for further management.

1) **Liver Transplant Centre Hotline**

If you have any problems after discharge, please call our:
Hotline: 22555800 (install record phone) (Monday to Friday)
We shall call you back in office hour

Notice: If you feel discomfort, such as fever, vomiting and diarrhea, please seek medical help as soon as possible.

2) **Return for follow-ups as scheduled**

In general, follow-up visits will be more frequent at the early period after discharge. You are necessary to return for follow-up, so that the doctor is able to give you safe and appropriate medical instructions.

Rejection and infection are commonly seen in liver transplant patients, so you need to undergo blood tests and evaluation. Please remember to bring along the required dosage of immunosuppressant e.g. FK506 on the day of follow-up visit, and take it after blood drawn at the outpatient clinic (no dispensing of drugs at S4 OPD setting).

For diabetes mellitus patients: If there is no special instruction, please have your breakfast and insulin injection before going to the clinic. If necessary, referral to a diabetes specialist will be arranged to you.

You **should record clearly your medications and the dosages** prescribed by the Liver Transplant Team doctors. Keep enough medications (an amount enough until the next scheduled visit). Without the doctors' instruction or a phone call indicating a change of medications, **never stop taking or change your medications.**

3) **Follow up**

In general, the blood result on the day of follow up cannot be released at the time to see the doctor. However, all the blood test results will be screened by our Liver Transplant surgeons, if there is any change of medication or dosage, our liver transplant coordinator will contact and instruct you accordingly. Therefore, **if you change address or telephone numbers, please update your record at S4 OPD counter as soon as possible.**

*******End*******