



# THE TRANSPLANT TEAM

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## MEMBERS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE TEAM BEHIND THE TRANSPLANT PROGRAM

### DIETITIAN

Prior to your transplant, it is important to maintain good nutrition to maximise your health and aid recovery. The dietitian is available to assist you with your eating program or any problem you may have, for example:

- a poor appetite and/or you are losing weight
- excessive weight
- high cholesterol

Any queries or questions regarding the adequacy of your eating pattern. Your dietitian will contact you during your assessment or in the outpatient assessment clinic.

### NURSING STAFF

Nursing staff in the outpatients clinic will be involved in your care both prior to and after your transplant. They will participate in your education regarding the transplant process, in particular, rejection, infection and relevant medication and also assist clinically during your outpatient clinic visits after your surgery.

### OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

Occupational therapy assists you to maintain maximum quality of life by addressing your ability to cope with daily living activities both at home and in the community.

Through the provision of equipment and/or use of energy conservation techniques, the occupational therapist will assist you in maintaining independence in these activities.

Being on a transplant waiting list, coping with change and reducing levels of independence can be extremely stressful. The occupational therapist is able to assist you to develop stress management techniques and relaxation skills. Following surgery, the occupational therapist can assist you in returning to suitable employment, recreational and leisure interests.

### PASTORAL CARE

Chaplains, as members of the hospital team, are available to support patients, relatives and staff. Pastoral ministry enables people to share their stories, express their needs, if any, and work with the chaplain to find the spiritual resource for addressing those needs. Specific denominational ministry is available on request, as is after-hours ministry. Please ask a nurse if you would like to see a chaplain.

### PHYSICIANS (CARDIOLOGISTS OR RESPIRATORY PHYSICIANS)

They are responsible for your assessment and ongoing care after the transplant. If you are admitted for assessment, they will be responsible for your care.

### PHYSIOTHERAPIST

Physiotherapy aims to maintain/increase your level of physical activity and overall fitness in the 'waiting time' prior to your transplant. This will help you in your recovery phase post-transplant. An individual exercise program will be designed for you to specifically cater for your needs. This program includes stretches, various strengthening and aerobic exercises - all carried out in a monitored environment. The Alfred Hospital Physiotherapy Department runs classes three times per week. The physiotherapist can otherwise refer you to an exercise program closer to your home.

Other specific problems may also be discussed with the physiotherapist. The physiotherapist will discuss post-operative care (chest physiotherapy and mobility/exercise) with you.



## THE TRANSPLANT TEAM

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### MEMBERS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE TEAM BEHIND THE TRANSPLANT PROGRAM (continued)

#### **SOCIAL WORKER / COUNSELLOR – PSYCHOSOCIAL EVALUATION**

Thoughtful consideration of psychological issues is important to successful transplant surgery. A social worker will assess you and your family to determine the stress facing you. Emotional stability and a supportive environment are important factors in achieving a successful recovery from the transplant operation. Your family plays an important role throughout the transplant process and support from family and other important people in your life is essential. If these important relationships in your lives are understood then the social workers are better able to assist you.

The social worker's role is generally a supportive one. The goal is to assist you and your family to achieve optimum functioning through the transplant process and if necessary to help you with appropriate lifestyle changes. They will also be able to assist and advise with practical difficulties of being away from home and work, such as finance, travel and accommodation.

At times of grief, bereavement and at times of crisis, counselling is offered and can support you through these difficult periods. If you have had significant emotional difficulties in the past or have needed psychiatric treatment we will arrange a meeting with our consultant psychiatrist who can provide further assistance.

In summary the social worker and where the consultant psychiatrist, learn of your psychological needs and are available to address them appropriately through the transplant process. The social worker has a responsibility to all transplant team members as well as to you and your family.

#### **SURGEONS**

Senior cardiologists and the surgical team will help assess your suitability for transplant and discuss issues relating to the operative technique. They will lead the surgical team when your transplant is performed.

#### **TRANSPLANT COORDINATOR**

The coordinator will meet you when the decision has been made that you are to be listed for a transplant. They will explain to you how you will be contacted when donor organs become available, will discuss transport to the hospital and will explain the need for regular blood tests while you are on the waiting list and will advise you how to do this. The coordinator must be advised of any change to your condition, location or admission to hospital. A coordinator is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can be contacted via the hospital switchboard.

#### **TRANSPLANT REHABILITATION COORDINATOR**

The rehabilitation coordinator is responsible for organising your involvement in the 7 week rehabilitation program after transplantation. In addition to this program, a support group is available for all partners or care givers of transplant patients.

The coordinator is also responsible for organising education seminars for patients on the waiting list to update and reinforce previous education.