

## **Before your liver transplant**

### **The MELD system**

Patients with liver disease are given a liver score called MELD (Model for End Stage Liver Disease Score). This score is based upon three routine laboratory test results:

- ❑ Bilirubin, which measures how effectively the liver excretes bile
- ❑ INR, which measures the liver's ability to make blood clotting factors
- ❑ Creatinine, which measures kidney function

This score may go up or down over time depending on the status of his or her liver disease. Patients are usually referred when their MELD score is 15 or higher. Many patients will have their MELD score assessed a number of times. Today donated livers go to the patients in the greatest need at that moment. Patients with the higher MELD scores will always be considered before those with lower scores, even if some patients with lower scores have waited longer.

MELD scores reflect the medical need of most liver transplant candidates. However, there may be special exceptions for patients with medical conditions not covered by MELD. If your transplant team believes your score does not reflect your need for a transplant, they can seek a higher MELD score than the one determined by the laboratory tests results alone.

Once listed getting a liver transplant depends upon several factors, such as:

- ❑ Blood type
- ❑ The number of other patients listed within the local area
- ❑ The illness level of the other patients waiting in the local area
- ❑ The number of organs available in the local area or region

If you have further questions or concerns additional details and informational resources are available on the following websites:

<http://www.optn.org>

<http://www.unos.org>

<http://www.transplantliving.org>

### **Before Liver Transplant**

You must have a thorough medical evaluation before you will be considered for a transplant. Our hepatologist will initially evaluate you in our clinic. When the hepatologist has decided that you qualify for a liver transplant evaluation you will be referred to a pre-liver transplant coordinator. You must first identify who will care for you before and after your transplant. This person is known as your caregiver. The next step is to have a variety of tests and consults done. These tests include:

- ❑ Laboratory tests
- ❑ Ultrasound/Ct scan/MRI
- ❑ Chest X-ray
- ❑ EKG/Electrocardiogram
- ❑ Pulmonary Function Tests
- ❑ Arterial blood gas
- ❑ Mammogram/ Pap Smear
- ❑ Prostate screening
- ❑ Esophagogastroduodenoscopy (EGD)
- ❑ Colonoscopy
- ❑ Vaccinations
- ❑ Consultations
  - Surgeon
  - Anesthesiologist
  - Dietician
  - Social Worker
  - Psychologist or Psychiatrist
  - Financial Coordinator
  - Dentist

It is your responsibility to keep your scheduled appointments. If your testing is not done at Loma Linda please let your coordinator assistant know when the testing is complete and request to have the results sent to Loma Linda.

When all the tests and consults are completed your case will be presented to the Patient Selection Committee.

Who is on the Patient Selection Committee?

- ❑ The transplant hepatologists
- ❑ The transplant surgeons
- ❑ The pre-liver transplant coordinators
- ❑ The post-liver transplant coordinators
- ❑ The clinic advanced practice nurses
- ❑ The transplant social worker
- ❑ The financial coordinator
- ❑ The Transplantation Institute clinical director

Once your case has been thoroughly reviewed the committee will recommend that you:

- ❑ Be placed on the transplant list (or)
- ❑ Require further testing (or)
- ❑ Require a period of observation (or)
- ❑ Are not a transplant candidate.

Your transplant coordinator will call and tell you what has been decided after the committee has met.