

Better in, Better out: Occupation-based Transplant Prehabilitation

According to (Scott, 2011) 16,000 individuals were on the waiting list for liver transplant as of 2011, with the wait time to receive a transplant as long as 3 years or possibly even longer. During this time, studies show that patients struggle with fatigue, muscle wasting, returning to valued roles, adjusting to new routines, returning to work and poor social functioning. These factors as well as the fear of dying is accompanied by high stress levels and deterioration of health and role performance. Patients continue to struggle post-operation as new routines have to be incorporated due to high risk of infection and the many complications can occur including organ rejection.

Patients who are suffering with cirrhosis and are planning to receive a transplant often have compounding factors such as malnutrition, muscle wasting, sleep disorders, fatigue and strict daily routines that make their health status very critical. Programs and research is focused to help these patients survive and live well as mortality rate is unstable and quality of life after surgery often shows poor results. The more medical conditions that are accumulated, the less likely the patients will survive and thrive. Programs that target holistic care for these patients are being developed to help improve outcomes. With needs spanning from psychosocial care to routine adjustment, occupational therapy plays an important role in creating a comprehensive program for patients enrolled in these programs.

Implications for Occupational Therapy

- Occupational therapy can contribute to better overall outcomes for the liver transplant institute
- Skilled in providing client centered care with a holistic approach
- Collaborate with patient to find out what motivates and what is meaningful to them
- Empower patient to increase their occupational participation and sense of worth
- Guide patients to engage with their own health
- Help individuals meet their personal goals in order to improve their overall quality of life
- We can address many client issues, such as sustaining client overall physical health
- Teach patient adaptive skills

LLUH Liver Transplant Prehab Program

Welcome to the LLUH Liver Transplant Prehab Program!

In this folder, you will find information about parts of your life that may be affected by your liver disease. These 6 topics are areas that your Prehab team can help you with in future sessions..

- 1. Energy conservation**
- 2. Pain management**
- 3. Physical exercise**
- 4. Sleep hygiene**
- 5. Stress management**
- 6. Caregiver burnout**

This program is not limited to the topic items listed above. If you have other specific goals and needs, just ask a member of your Prehab team!

The following pages provide an introduction to these 6 topics to help you think about what you may want to work on with your Prehab team.

Should you have questions, please feel free to bring it up in your upcoming session or contact the Transplant Institute Prehab Team or reach us by email at Drakoski@llu.edu .

Energy Conservation

What is Energy Conservation?

Energy conservation helps you use less energy during the day. This helps you not use too much energy doing one thing.

What are Energy Conservation Techniques?

- Plan your day, week, or month.
 - Switch between heavy and light tasks (ex: moving furniture to dusting).
 - Take frequent breaks to rest.
 - Avoid doing too much in one day.
- Analyze each activity.
 - Is the task necessary for you to complete? Can someone else do the task for you? Can the task be made easier?
- Organize your work areas.
 - Place all the supplies for a task in one place. This place should be close to where they will be used
 - Place supplies in easy reach. Avoid bending or reaching for them.
- Maintain a good posture while completing tasks.
 - Example: Work at a level so your elbows are bent to 90 degrees and shoulders are relaxed.
- Try not to stretch, reach, or bend over during tasks.
- Keep your work areas clean, well lit, and as free from distractions as possible.
- Use both hands as much as possible during tasks for greater efficiency and speed.
- Stay calm while completing tasks.
 - Use relaxation techniques as needed, such as purse lip breathing.

Examples of Energy Conservation Techniques in Everyday Tasks:

- Eating / Meal Preparation.
 - Eat slowly and completely chew your food.
 - Cook a larger meal, so you can save several portions.
- Grooming
 - Sit down to: shave, comb your hair, brush your teeth, or apply your make up.
 - Use an electric toothbrush or razor.
- Bathing and Showering
 - Use a shower bench/chair to sit down while washing your body and/or hair.
 - Use 2-in-1 shampoo and conditioner.
- Dressing
 - Collect all your clothes before you start dressing.
 - Use long handled equipment to avoid bending and reaching while putting on undergarments, socks, pants, and shoes.

Resources:

- The University Hospital of Columbia and Cornell (https://mynyp.org/pdf/energy_conserve.pdf)

Pain Management

What is pain?

Pain is an unpleasant experience that can affect your daily life. Pain can result from something as simple as stubbing your toe which is known as *acute*, or it can be long term pain which is known as *chronic*. Any type of pain that you experience should be addressed and not ignored. These are some tips that may help to relieve your pain.

How to manage pain:

- Talk to your primary care provider about pain medications
- Massage the area of pain
- Get bed rest
- Use Cold/ Hot Packs for relief
- Low impact Exercise
- Try guided imagery and visualization
- Practice meditation

Other tips around the home:

- Don't ignore the pain
- Take frequent breaks if needed
- If it hurts, stop what you are doing
- Change your seating or standing positions

Resources:

- American Chronic Pain Association (<https://theacpa.org/Pain-Management-Tools>)
- University of Wisconsin- Guided Imagery Handout (http://www.fammed.wisc.edu/files/webfm-uploads/documents/outreach/im/handout_guided_imagery.pdf)

Exercise

Physical Exercise:

Physical exercise gets the body moving. This includes tasks such as walking and weight lifting. Exercise is important for your health and well-being. Exercising can help you control weight and lower stress levels. Exercise can also make your bones and muscles stronger and lowers risk of some diseases.

Exercise Tips:

- Start slow by warming up.
- Know your limits and set achievable goals.
- Try to exercise at least 3 times per week.
 - Gradually increase to 5 times per week.
- Get enough rest.
- Eat a balanced diet.
- Wear appropriate clothing.
- Drink plenty of water.
- When ending your exercise, allow time to cool down.

Other things that you can do:

- Join your local gym or a recreational club.
- Take frequent walks.
- Find a workout buddy.
- Find an exercise that you enjoy.
- Listen to music when you exercise.

Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
(<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/pa-health/>)
- The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center
(<https://patienteducation.osumc.edu/Documents/exercise.pdf>)
- American Heart Association
(http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/PhysicalActivity/Physical-Activity_UCM_001080_SubHomePage.jsp)

Sleep

What is sleep?

Sleep is a period when you allow your body to rest and heal. It is important for survival, and plays a big role in your overall health. A lack of sleep can cause you to have headaches, memory problems, and less energy. It may also cause you to have a decrease in quality of life and functioning.

How to get better sleep:

- Exercise, but limit it to 4 hours before bed.
- Eat a healthy and balanced diet.
- Reduce stress in your life.
- Go to bed at the same time daily.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- Limit use of drinks with caffeine such as coffee, tea, or soda.
- Limit use of electronics 1 hour before bed.

Other tips around the home:

- Dim lights in your room 1 hour before bed.
- Avoid large meals close to bedtime.
- Create a bedtime routine.
- Only use your bed for sleep and sexual activity.
- Avoid upsetting activities or conversations prior to bedtime.
- Keep the bedroom quiet and free from distractions.
- Use relaxation techniques such as deep breathing.
- Wear socks and keep your hands/ feet warm.

Resources:

The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. (<http://www.aota.org/About-Occupational-Therapy/Professionals/HW/Sleep.aspx>)

Center for Clinical Intervention (<http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/disclaimer/index.cfm>)

Centers for Disease Control (https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about_sleep/index.html)

Stress Management

What is Stress?

Stress is how your body responds to certain events in life. Your body reacts to a stressful event with the “fight or flight” reflex which can sometimes last until the stressful encounter has ended. Sometimes the body has a hard time turning this reflex off, which makes us feel stressed even when we aren’t in danger. When you become constantly stressed, it can negatively impact your health. Negative effects from stress may include high blood pressure, chest pain, and trouble sleeping.

Ways to Manage Stress:

- Engage in healthy habits such as:
 - Daily exercise.
 - Eat a healthy diet.
 - Drink plenty of water.
 - Get enough sleep.
 - Organize your time.
 - Spend time with family and friends.
 - Participate in enjoyable activities.
- Complete deep breathing exercises
 - Find a quiet place to sit. Close your eyes and place your hands on your stomach. Take a deep breath in through your nose and feel your chest expand. Hold the breath for 3 seconds and exhale through your mouth. Repeat this process for 3 to 5 minutes.
- Listen to relaxing music.
- Read a relaxing book.
- Remember to laugh.
 - Watch a funny movie or read a funny story.

Resources:

- American Heart Association (http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/StressManagement/FightStressWithHealthyHabits/Fight-Stress-with-Healthy-Habits_UCM_307992_Article.jsp#.W0VVkhiZPBI)
- Mayo Clinic (<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/relaxation-technique/art-20045368?pg=1>)
- American Psychological Association (<http://www.apa.org/topics/stress/index.aspx>)

Caregiver Burnout

What is Caregiver Burnout?

Caring for someone who is sick can be hard. You now have to care for someone with many needs, while also taking care of your own. Taking care of a sick family member can make you feel high levels of stress. These levels of stress can lead to depression, anxiety, and burnout. When you have burnout you feel overwhelmed. You may lose interest in caring for your sick family member. You may not be motivated to carry on your role as caregiver.

Signs of Caregiver Burnout:

- Constant mood swings.
- Constantly getting sick.
- Loss of pleasure in things you usually enjoy.
- Lack of sleep
- Withdrawing from your friends and family.

Strategies to Manage Stress and Avoid Burnout:

- Accept help from your friends and family members.
- Make time each day to focus on yourself.
- Join a support group of persons in similar situations.
- Keep a log of medications and appointments.
- Understand the limit of what you are able to do, and ask for help.
- Find someone you are able to talk to who will not judge you. Understand that your feelings are normal.
- Be sure to exercise, eat healthy, and get plenty of sleep.

Resources:

- American Heart Association (http://www.heart.org/idc/groups/heart-public/@wcm/@hcm/documents/downloadable/ucm_300657.pdf)
- Mayo Clinic (<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/art-20044784>)
- ALS Association (<http://www.alsa.org/als-care/caregivers/caregivers-month/symptoms-of-caregiver-burnout.html>)

For more information on caregiver burnout and support, please feel free to watch the videos at the following link: <http://www.cirrhosis-caregivers.com>

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