

Extracorporeal whole liver perfusion for acute liver failure

Information for the public

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This procedure can only be done as part of a research study. This is because there are well-known serious complications. There is also not enough evidence to be sure how well it works.

Your healthcare professional should talk to you about the research.

Acute liver failure is when the liver stops working within days or weeks. The patient often dies if they do not get a liver transplant. In this procedure blood is diverted from a large vein, usually in the leg, to a whole liver (perfusion) outside the body (extracorporeal) and returned to the patient through another large vein, usually in the neck. The liver may be a donor human liver that is unsuitable for transplantation or from an animal such as a pig. The aim is to keep the patient alive until their liver starts working again or they get a liver transplant.

The [NHS website](#) may have information on your condition and treatment options.

Is this procedure right for me?

You should be included in [making decisions about your care](#).

Your healthcare professionals should explain the risks and benefits of this procedure and how it is done. They should discuss your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns. They should offer you more information about the procedure. Your family or carers can be involved if you want or need them to be.

You will be asked to decide whether you agree (consent) to have the procedure. Find out more about [giving consent to treatment on the NHS website](#).

Some questions to think about

- How many appointments will I need?
- What are the possible benefits? How likely am I to get them?
- What are the risks or side effects? How likely are they?
- Will I have to stay in hospital?
- What happens if it does not work or something goes wrong?
- What happens if I do not want the procedure?
- Are other treatments available?

More information

- [NICE's information on interventional procedures guidance](#) explains what an interventional procedure is and how we assess it.
- [NICE's information on interventional procedure recommendations](#) explains what only in research means.

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