

Clinical Handbook for Heart Transplantation

Frequently Asked Questions

1) What is the *Clinical Handbook for Heart Transplantation*?

The *Clinical Handbook for Heart Transplantation* is a compilation of best practice guidelines for the pre-to-post care of heart transplant patients. The Handbook is a tool for transplant hospitals and health care providers to outline the minimum standards of care for each transplant recipient. The Handbook aims to identify opportunities to enhance integration of services across the patient care continuum and facilitate efforts to improve existing processes within Ontario's heart transplant centres. The Handbook is not intended to replace the professional skill and judgement of healthcare providers, nor inhibit the development of new and innovative transplant solutions.

The Clinical Handbook includes the following tools to guide the development of policies, procedures, and processes for heart transplant programs:

1. A clinical pathway for typical heart transplant patients beginning from the time a referral is received by the transplant program to post-transplantation. The clinical pathway outlines the general process that Ontario patients follow specific to their transplant care.
2. Services that correspond to the major phases of care that patients receive during the transplant process.

2) How was the Handbook developed?

To foster partnership and strengthen clinician engagement, the clinical pathway and services were developed using opinions from clinical experts from all Ontario transplant centres and guided by national and international evidence-based guidelines. As a result, the Clinical Handbook is a compendium of evidence-based rationale and clinical consensus on guidelines for heart transplant patients.

3) How can the Handbook be used by transplant centres?

Quality teams at transplant centres can use the Clinical Handbook to compare local practices to those outlined in the Handbook with the goal of reducing unnecessary practice variations and optimizing resource utilization. Furthermore, it can be used by transplant centres to guide the development of policies, procedures, and processes such as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), order sets, and medical directives.

Additionally, current performance indicators provided by TGLN will allow transplant centres to measure process and outcome improvements at both the local and provincial level. Any quality improvements efforts undertaken by each site may be monitored overtime to evaluate whether the change was effective, and/or impacted other parts of the transplant system.