

# Relationships, Sexuality and Transplantation

Managing any relationship while having a chronic illness, can be a time which brings people closer together. It can also be challenging and sometimes distressing as people with liver disease can experience accumulation of fluid, fatigue, itch, low energy, cognitive changes, and reduced sex drive. Sexuality, sexual expression, sense of personal wellbeing and self-esteem can all be temporarily affected.

- The symptoms and side effects of liver disease in both men and women, can affect intimate relationships and sexual function.
- Transplantation improves general health including sexual function and fertility.
- Pregnancy in women is possible but not recommended within the first 2 years post-transplant.
- Relationship counselling can be incredibly useful before and after transplantation, and during any stage of life.

It is useful to note that after a transplant has occurred and the body become healthier; symptoms significantly improve. Many patients have reported that the hope of improved post-transplant health, helped them see a promising future.

- Communications within all relationships is key.
- Care, compassion, and intimacy can be expressed in many ways. Hug and touch remain powerful.
- Fertility is generally restored post-transplant in those of reproductive age.
- Patients are welcome to discuss any concerns or queries with the team, regarding their illness and treatments in context of relationships, sexuality and /or fertility.
- Information for individuals or couples about professional support services is available from the treating team, general practitioners and from other community practitioners and organisations.

## For more information



Relationship counselling | Health and wellbeing | Queensland Government

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/support/relationships/counselling>

Support for young people who identify as LGBTIQ+ | Youth | Queensland Government

<https://www.qld.gov.au/youth/family-social-support/support-lgbti-young-people>

Welcome to Head to Health | Head to Health. <https://www.headtohealth.gov.au/>

## Transplant Social Work

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