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DIL DE KE DEKHO

WHO REQUIRES A HEART TRANSPLANT?

A patient whose life expectancy is between seven days to a few months is a priority recipient say doctors. However, any patient who has chronic heart failure, and whose life expectancy is reduced, may be eligible for heart transplantation. "Usually, a person who is below 60 years of age is considered for a heart transplant. This is done keeping in mind that the organ gets the maximum survival benefit and improvement in quality of life," says Dr Thacker. Experts explain that if a person who is already old, gets a transplant done but dies within a few years from any other cause not related to the heart, then the entire procedure is in vain and that is the reason why transplants are not done in elderly patients.

Eating a variety of foods can help get all the vitamins and minerals you need. Your diet should be low in saturated fats. Limit salt to control your blood pressure. Balance your meals and exercise. Have meals on time and never skip. Include oats, eggs, avocado or cherries, grapefruits, bhindi or tomato in your diet

— Dr Nupur Krishnan,
clinical nutritionist

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WHO CAN BE A DONOR?

A person whose brain does not receive any blood and stops functioning even though the heart is beating, is a brain dead person and such a person can be a donor.

"After the brain dies the heart keeps beating for 24 to 72 hours in case of children and for upto 24 to 48 hours in case of adults. That is the period when the family should donate the organ," says Dr Thacker.

PRE-REQUISITES FOR A TRANSPLANT

The donor and recipient should have a match before a transplant can be considered. A compat-

ible blood group and the size of the organ is important. Dr Thacker says, "A patient who weighs 100 kgs needs the heart of a person who weighs at least 130-140kgs in order to sustain blood circulation in the recipient's body."

LIFE AFTER A TRANSPLANT

After a transplant, the recipient can lead a healthy, normal life for more than 25 years. Dr Shah explains, "A post-transplant anti-rejection therapy is to be taken to ensure that the recipient's body does not attack

DETECT A HEART ATTACK

- ▲ Discomfort in the chest, including squeezing or pain which could sometimes go to your arms, jaws, shoulders and back and this usually increases with exertion.
- ▲ Unusual shortness of breath with mild usual activity (in women this is more common).
- ▲ Profuse sweating, vomiting and nausea, unexplained weakness.

— Dr Ashish Contractor, Cardiologist

FOR A HEALTHY HEART

Abstain from all tobacco products, eat right, lead a active life and go for regular check-ups

the donor's heart to reduce its function."

MONEY WISE

Dr Thacker says, "Our hospital is coming up with a program and we have a couple of patients who have booked with us. They will be operated upon as soon as a donor is available. The costing is in process but the charge may be approximately around Rs 10 lakh and that could include two weeks to three weeks of hospitalisation inclusive of five days in ICU."

BACK IN TIME

The first ever heart transplant in the world was done on December 3, 1967 by Dr Christian Barnard and within six months, the first ever heart transplant in India was done in the KEM hospital, Mumbai, by Dr P K Sen in 1968. There has to be at least ten heart transplants in one year in a hospital for it to be recognised as a heart transplant program. In our country there may be stray cases of heart transplants but there are no successful programs yet.

WHY DIDN'T HEART TRANSPLANT PICK UP?

The first reason is that there is a tremendous lack of donor awareness. The second is that it is a very expensive operation and there is also the long term cost of anti-rejection therapy explains Dr Shah.

B'TOWN GETS INSPIRED

The film *Traffic* has a touching real-life story about heart transplants. Dr Ashokan and Dr Pushpanjali from Kanchi, Tamil Nadu, lost their son Hithendran, 15, in a motor-bike accident on Sept 20, 2008. Hithendran was moved to Apollo Hospital, Chennai. The doctors declared the boy brain dead. The parents then, donated all functioning organs. A donated heart can't be kept for more than 30 minutes after it has been removed, so the doctors in zeroed on Abhirami, 9, from Bengaluru to be the recipient of the heart. Dr Cherian, took charge. The heart was successfully taken out and preserved in ice box, but, considering the volume of traffic in Chennai, it would take about 45 minutes to travel between hospitals. So, a request for help was sent to the Police Commissioner of Chennai, who diverted other vehicles on the route and turned all the traffic lights enroute green, so that the heart could reach the recipient hospital in just 11 minutes! After the reaching of heart, Dr. Cherian team immediately handled the operation and Abhirami survived.