

# HEART TRANSPLANT



A heart transplant is an operation used to remove a damaged or unhealthy heart and replace it with a donor heart. Heart transplants are used only in severe cases. Success rates are high, however, with 75% of patients living within three years of their operation.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS



On average, there are **4,000 candidates** on the wait list for a heart transplant in the United States.



The average cost of a heart transplant in 2020 was nearly **\$2 million**.



There are about **100,000 annual deaths** of patients on an organ transplant list.

## POPULATION STATISTICS

- On average over 4,000 patients are on the wait list for heart transplants in the United States.
- More than 4,000 heart transplants took place in 2022.

## DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

Complications that can lead to a heart transplant include heart failure caused by:

- Coronary artery or heart disease
- Abnormal heart rhythms
- A weakened heart muscle
- Abnormal heart valves
- Heart birth defects

## FINANCIAL BURDEN

Given that heart transplant patients spend up to three weeks in the hospital and, on average, three more months being monitored, heart transplants are expensive.

- The average cost of a heart transplant in 2020 was nearly \$2 million.
- Medicare covers 80% of a heart transplant, but private insurance coverage rates vary.
- Additional costs to patients include time off work, transportation to a transplant facility, lodging for family and childcare costs.

## ACCESS ISSUES

**The largest barrier to care for heart transplant patients is the ratio of available matched to needed donor hearts.** On average, there are over 100,000 annual deaths of patients on an organ transplant list.

There are also disparities. Patients who are black, female or lack private insurance have a more difficult time gaining access to a transplant list referral. Black Americans, in particular, have longer wait times than other racial and ethnic groups.