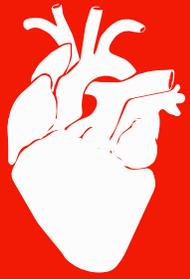


LVAD Decision Aid: Frequently Asked Questions



Below are the most frequently asked questions about how to use the LVAD decision aid with patients

Has the effectiveness of decision aids been established? What about the LVAD decision aid?

Yes. A 2017 [meta-analysis](#) of decision aids with 115 studies and almost 35,000 patients found that decision aid use was significantly associated with increased patient knowledge, perception of outcomes and risks, and participation in decision-making. It was also associated with lower decisional conflict and less uncertainty about personal values. A [randomized controlled trial](#) of the LVAD decision aid found that it significantly improved knowledge and ability to accurately envision life post-LVAD.

What is the most efficient way to use the LVAD decision aid with patients?

The most efficient way is to use it as the primary tool for patient education. Clinical sites that use the decision aid this way have found that it takes about the same amount of time to use as standard education (~1 hour). These sites report numerous benefits to using the LVAD decision aid, including the use of patient perspectives and stories, photos of diverse patients and a balanced presentation of benefits and risks of LVAD. The decision aid can also be integrated with existing educational materials.

How do I integrate the LVAD decision aid with my institution's existing education materials?

Identifying areas of overlap will help minimize the overall amount of time spent during education. You may find that some sections of the LVAD decision aid are used less frequently and should focus on using the sections that provide the most benefit to your patients and clinical flow. A trial period using it with patients will help identify which sections integrate best with your existing education materials. Current sites using the LVAD decision aid report the following sections are used most frequently: [How to Decide](#), [Living with an LVAD](#), [LVAD by the Numbers](#), [Questions to Ask Your Doctor](#).

How can I avoid patients being overwhelmed with the amount of information in the decision aid?

The LVAD decision aid was developed according to patient and clinician feedback. It is written at an 8th grade reading level. The modular format with multiple sections and handouts allows for different subjects to be addressed at different times and in various contexts. The exercises (Knowledge Scale, LVAD and Your Values) can help clinicians pinpoint areas where education should be focused. Caregivers can also help patients work through the different sections and exercises.

How is the decision aid different from standard LVAD education materials?**What do patients like about it?**

[Development of the LVAD decision aid](#) was informed by interviews with over 60 patients, caregivers, cardiologists, LVAD coordinators and other medical providers and in accordance with standards set by the International Patient Decision Aid Standards Collaboration. The result is a patient-centered tool that synthesizes the top informational needs of each group and focuses on a balanced presentation of risks and benefits of LVAD. Additionally, videos available at www.lvaddecisionaid.com feature real patients and caregivers talking about their experiences. These videos are helpful supplementary materials to use when it is difficult to schedule a meeting between LVAD candidates and someone with an LVAD.

Is the LVAD decision aid designed for inpatient or outpatient use?

The LVAD decision aid is designed for both settings. It is divided into sections to facilitate use across multiple outpatient appointments or with multiple specialists during inpatient evaluation.

Is the LVAD decision aid only beneficial for hospitals without a well-established education program?

No. The LVAD decision aid is designed for all hospitals that implant LVADs. Sites using it have an implant volume ranging from 30-150 per year and include new and well-established programs. Sites with well-established LVAD programs report that the decision aid enhanced their existing standard of education by helping consolidate multiple education materials, providing information that is not specific to a particular device and giving patients access to information about real-life experiences of other patients.

Does the LVAD decision aid have the most current clinical data? What if outcomes for my site are different from what is in the decision aid?

Yes. Statistics about LVAD-related outcomes are from the latest published INTERMACS report which contains data for patients through 12/31/2017. A new one-page supplement summarizes available outcomes data for HeartMate 3, which is not included in INTERMACS yet. We encourage sites to include site-specific outcomes data by adding it to the decision aid as an insert, or by noting and marking differences in the decision aid when reviewing it with patients.

Is there a Spanish version of the LVAD decision aid?

Currently there is not a Spanish version of the LVAD decision aid. However, many sites use the decision aid with Spanish speaking patients by verbally translating relevant sections, using the photos and graphs in the LVAD by the Numbers section as a conversation starter, and by encouraging English-speaking family members to review the decision aid.

What is the best time to give patients the LVAD decision aid?

The LVAD decision aid can be given to patients at any point during their LVAD evaluation and decision-making process. During interviews with patients, many wished that they had received more education about LVAD sooner. As such, we recommend giving the decision aid to patients early when education is first started. Clinical sites that have chosen a standardized time for patients to receive the decision aid (i.e., during consent for evaluation) have had more success at ensuring all eligible patients receive it, as opposed to deciding on a case by case basis.