Heart Transplant Program

Banner – University Medical Center Tucson has been a leader in heart care since performing Arizona’s first heart transplant in 1979. Six years later, it completed the state’s first combined heart/lung transplant. Over the next several years, transplant surgeons in Tucson reached incredible milestones, including performing the world’s first coronary artery bypass surgery on a transplanted heart (1988) and the world’s first mitral valve replacement on a transplanted heart (1990). In 1985, Banner – University Medical Center Tucson became the world’s first heart transplant program to successfully implant a total artificial heart, ultimately paving the way for use of durable mechanical circulatory support devices in patients facing advanced heart disease and end-stage heart failure. Beyond leveraging the latest durable device technologies, physicians and researchers at Banner – University Medical Center Tucson are also designing some of today’s most advanced artificial heart devices. Today, the Heart Transplant Program stands as a pillar of heart care excellence supported by decades of experience and an unwavering commitment to innovation.

Multidisciplinary care

Heart failure patients benefit from a multidisciplinary care team that spans Phoenix and Tucson, working together under the umbrella of Banner – University Medicine. Heart Transplant Program experts collaborate with colleagues from the hospital’s other clinical specialties to provide comprehensive care that takes into account each patient’s overall health status and organ function. They also work with cardiology experts at the Heart Institute at Banner – University Medical Center Phoenix to serve heart failure patients remotely. For those living in the greater Phoenix area, this means being able to receive fully integrated pre- and post-transplant care close to home.
Heart Transplant Program patients are supported by a comprehensive team of cardiology and transplant experts that includes:

- Transplant cardiologists
- Transplant surgeons
- Transplant infectious disease physicians
- Transplant nurse coordinators
- Pharmacists
- Nutritionists
- Social workers
- Financial counselors
- Engineers and perfusionists specially trained in managing assist devices, including the total artificial heart

**Artificial heart program**

Banner – University Medical Center Tucson has performed more than 600 implants of various ventricular assist devices and total artificial hearts to date. These durable mechanical circulatory support devices help patients whose weakened hearts can no longer pump enough blood. While transplant is considered the gold standard for treating end-stage heart failure, it is not always an option. When a donor organ is not available or when a patient is deemed ineligible for heart transplant surgery due to age or health factors, a durable device offers the best chance of survival.

**Transplant resources**

Learn more about organ transplantation from the following trusted health resources:

- Banner Health – bannerhealth.com/services/transplant
- Donate Life – organdonor.gov
- Donor Network of Arizona – dnaz.org
- Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network – optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/
- Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients – srtr.org
- Transplant Living – transplantliving.org
- United Network for Organ Sharing – unos.org