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UNDERSTANDING TIPS & PORTAL HYPERTENSION

A Patient & Family Guide to Portal Hypertension Treatment

What Is Portal Hypertension?

Portal hypertension occurs when pressure builds within the portal venous system, commonly due to cirrhosis or chronic liver disease. Elevated pressure can lead to fluid accumulation, enlarged veins, bleeding complications, and other serious symptoms.

What Is TIPS?

TIPS stands for Transjugular Intrahepatic Portosystemic Shunt. The procedure creates a channel within the liver to reduce portal venous pressure and redirect blood flow.

Why Is TIPS Performed?

TIPS may be considered for patients with recurrent ascites, variceal bleeding, portal hypertensive complications, hepatic hydrothorax, or selected cases of portal vein thrombosis.

How Is the Procedure Performed?

The procedure is typically performed through a small vein in the neck using imaging guidance. A stent is placed within the liver to connect the portal and hepatic venous systems.

Potential Benefits

- Reduced risk of recurrent variceal bleeding
- Improvement in refractory ascites
- Decreased need for repeated paracentesis
- Minimally invasive image-guided procedure

Risks & Considerations

Potential risks include bleeding, infection, heart strain, shunt dysfunction, and hepatic encephalopathy. Careful patient selection is important.

Frequently Asked Questions

- Will I still need my hepatologist?
- Can the shunt narrow over time?
- What happens if encephalopathy develops?
- How often is imaging follow-up needed?
- How long does a TIPS last?

Educational material intended for patients and families. Individual treatment recommendations depend on clinical evaluation and multidisciplinary care.