

THE ROOTSHTAIN BROTHERS - LIVING DONOR LIVER TRANSPLANT



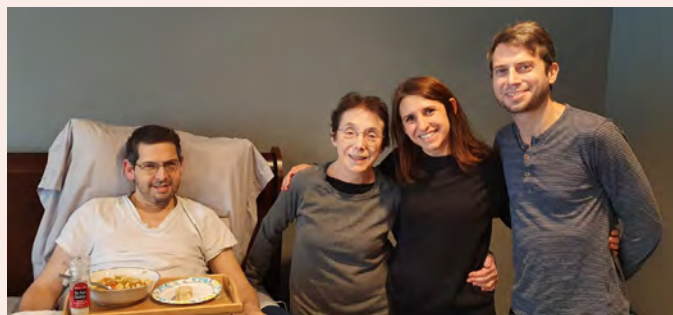
Gavriel (left) and Uriel (right) in the hospital the day after living donor liver transplant

On April 4th, 2022, Uriel Rootshtain became the 26th person to have an adult-to-adult living donor liver transplant at UW Medicine, a program that was revitalized in 2020 and serves the entire Pacific Northwest. Uriel's medical journey began several years prior, when he was diagnosed with primary sclerosing cholangitis (PSC), a rare disease that causes the bile ducts in the liver to become inflamed and scar, eventually blocking the flow of bile and causing irreversible damage to the liver. In September

2021, Uriel's condition deteriorated so quickly that he was admitted to the hospital and placed on the liver transplant list. That's when he met liver transplant surgeon Dr. Mark Sturdevant and learned about the living donor liver transplant program. *"When I went onto the transplant list my MELD score was in the mid-20s, and for someone with a B blood type, a MELD score of 20+ puts you pretty high on the list. The initial thinking was there could be a deceased donor relatively soon, but then my labs stabilized and my MELD score dropped quite a lot although I was still feeling very fatigued. I ended up much farther down the list as a result, so it looked like it was going to be a much longer haul."* Initially, Uriel didn't tell his family about the option for living donor liver transplant as he did not want to put them in harm's way, but when two of his siblings eventually learned of the option, they jumped at the opportunity to be tested to see if they could help their brother. Due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions, both siblings began initial testing at home in Johannesburg. Uriel's brother Gavriel shares, *"The tests came back positive for both of us in terms of being good candidates. My sister has four children and I said I would prefer to go if it was between us. From there they did additional testing to make sure I didn't have PSC as well, because it would be no point in giving him a sick liver."* Gavriel arrived in Seattle on March 4th and the next day began another round of testing to verify the tests done in South Africa. A month later, it was surgery day. Gavriel shares, *"The work, organization and*

effort felt like climbing a rollercoaster. Once operation day came, it felt like we had made it to the very top and now the different rush of the actual operation and recovery was one of relief that we both came out ok and were stable. Very grateful to the entire surgical team and care team for everything they achieved for us." Gavriel's donor operation took seven hours, and Uriel's procedure took ten hours, longer than expected due to the extensive damage the disease had caused on his body. Uriel shares, *"We were up and about walking the next day, getting our laps in in the hospital. Physically and from a labs point of view we were making very good progress. We were checked out of the hospital after a week – we were told initially we could be in for as long as two weeks."*

Uriel and Gavriel are now more than two months post-transplant and doing well. *"General awareness about this option is very low. It comes as a surprise to almost everyone that you can take a portion of someone's liver and transplant it, and that both halves will grow back to full size,"* says Uriel. Gavriel is quick to add, *"Initially, we didn't even know as a family that it was an option to be a living donor... especially for people with PSC, it's a good viable option to be aware of."* Uriel notes, *"I was fortunate that I had family members that took matters into their own hands and decided to get themselves tested to see if they were eligible. Living donor transplant has helped me tremendously in terms of giving me a path from where I previously wouldn't have had one – at least for a long time."*



Uriel, Leonie (mother), Ayelet (sister) and Gavriel, the day after they arrived home post-transplant



Top: Gavriel, Uriel and Leonie (mother) at discharge, one week after the living donor transplant surgery.



Bottom: Uriel, Angela (Uriel's wife), and Gavriel at SeaTac airport as Gavriel flies home to South Africa