If your loved one improves, the team will begin to decrease the support the ECMO machine is providing to determine if your loved one's heart and lungs can work without ECMO. If so, our team will turn the machine off and remove the cannula(s).

If your loved one is not healing or getting better after being on ECMO therapy, the team will share this information with you and discuss other potential options including stopping ECMO and allowing for natural death to occur.

Key Teams & Resources

ECMO Team: ECMO care requires a team approach. Doctors, nurse practitioners and physician assistants who are commonly referred to as advanced practice providers (APPs), respiratory therapists, nurses and perfusionists make up the team that cares for your loved ones.

ECMO Coordinator: An advanced practice provider who will help with coordinating care between the teams.

Cardiothoracic (CT) Surgery Team: A team of surgeons (attending, fellow and resident doctors) that perform surgeries and help manage ECMO.

ICU Team: The "home team" that guide care and communication while in the ICU. This team is your primary contact.

Consultant Team: Special teams that help with specific support needs your loved one may have. Examples include Palliative Care, Nephrology, and Cardiology.

Emory University Hospital
1364 Clifton Road NE
Atlanta, GA

Parking: Please look for the Emergency Department. These doors have valet parking that is free to visitors.

Room Number: _____

Key Contacts:
5E ICU: 404-712-7335
4TN ICU: 404-251-6450
5G ICU: 404-712-7200
Spiritual Health: 404-712-7200

EMORY HEALTHCARE

ECMO

An Informational Guide for Patient Families and Loved Ones

What is ECMO?

Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) is the most advanced life support that exists.

ECMO is a machine that supports the body by circulating blood outside the body. This machine acts as artificial support for the heart and/or lungs.

What does ECMO do?

There are two types of ECMO:

- **Venovenous (VV ECMO)** is a machine that acts as an artificial lung.
- **Venoarterial (VA ECMO)** is a machine that acts as an artificial heart and lung.

Why does my loved one need ECMO?

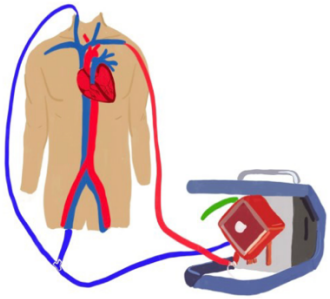
ECMO is used when usual treatments for heart and/or lung failure are not working.

It does not fix or cure the heart or lungs. It takes over the work of those organs and gives time to see if your loved one's body can heal.

How is my loved on put on ECMO?

For ECMO to work, a large portion of the patient's blood supply must pass through the machine (that acts like an artificial heart or lung). This is done with large tubes (also called cannula) that are placed in the large blood vessels.

Cannula can be in the neck, legs, or chest. Your loved one will get sedation and pain medicine before we place these tubes.



Your Role as a Loved One

We want you to be there for your loved one. There will be a lot of medical equipment in your loved one's hospital room. We will make sure we keep space open for you to be near them. Please take breaks and also take care of yourself.

Your loved one's privacy is important to us. You will be given a password and should have this available when asking for updates over the phone.

Visitation policies are based on your loved one's illness and the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) they are in. Please designate one person to be the primary contact for our team. That person will receive and share information with others important to your loved one.

Things to Know about ECMO

ECMO is the most advanced type of life support that exists.

ECMO does not cure your loved one's heart or lung failure.

ECMO is an invasive type of support that in most cases requires a blood thinning medication to run.

ECMO can come with several risks and/ or complications such as:

- **Bleeding:** It's common to need blood or blood product transfusions while on ECMO; bleeding rarely becomes life threatening but can result in bleeding in the brain, urinary or gastrointestinal tract.
- **Infection:** Infections could have already been present prior to ECMO or be something new that's taken advantage of the patient's weakened state of critical illness.
- **Tissue, skin or limb damage:** This can happen near ECMO cannula, chest or extremities because of changes in normal blood flow and needed equipment.
- **Stroke:** Either bleeding or clot in the brain can happen because the normal flow of blood is interrupted by ECMO.

ECMO Removal

Without ECMO, people with conditions as serious as these would not be expected to recover or live, but even with ECMO, not all patients will heal or even survive. About half of patients who are given ECMO trials will live.

These might not seem like great odds, but due to how ill your loved one currently is, this is the highest form of life support available. Remember if your loved one is being considered for this form of life support, there is a higher likelihood they are close to dying.