

# Victorian ECMO Service Information



## WHAT IS ECMO?

ECMO is a special form of advanced life support used to treat the sickest patients. By putting a patient on ECMO, it gives temporary life-support with extra time for the heart or lungs, or both, to recover and repair themselves when conventional treatments are failing in conditions that are reversible.

You have been given this leaflet because someone you care about is in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and is being considered or is on a treatment known as Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO).

More information about recovery after ECMO can be found at the link below.

[VISIT VECMO](#)

## HOW DOES ECMO WORK?

During ECMO, the patient's own heart and lungs are rested. The blood is given oxygen by an artificial lung (called an oxygenator) and is circulated around the body by an external pump.

A medical specialist puts two tubes in the major blood vessels in the neck, groin or chest. These tubes are connected to the ECMO machine. Blood passes from a large vein, via tubing, through the pump and oxygenator. It is then pumped back via tubing into the patient's blood circulation.

For a full explanation on the ECMO machine components and how it works please watch this video.

[WATCH VIDEO](#)



## WHAT IS VECMOS?

The Victorian ECMO Service (VECMOS) is a state-wide collaboration of hospitals in partnership with Ambulance Victoria, that provides ECMO for critically ill people.

Patients who require ongoing care may transfer to a Victorian ECMO Service site. Being transferred to another hospital is a normal part of care.

The service has been established to deliver timely, accessible and expert ECMO patient care by creating a network of hospitals in the state that provide accredited ECMO initiation, transport and subsequent care in a coordinated and governed system.

**Caring for critically ill people  
throughout Victoria who have  
reversible acute lung and heart failure.**

## WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

More information, videos and resources can be found at the Victorian ECMO Service website

[visit our website](#)

## CONSUMER FEEDBACK

Consumer experience plays a key part in helping us improve the Victorian ECMO Service.

Patients or carers may be contacted by VECMOS to have the opportunity to provide valuable feedback.

If you have recently used our service or have had a loved one requiring ECMO, and would like to provide feedback, you can contact us.

[email us](#)

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