

Marine moves fingers after rare hand transplant

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(AP) -- Surgeons have transplanted a hand onto a Marine who was hurt in a training accident, and he has some movement in his fingers, according to the hospital where the operation occurred.

The surgery was performed at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center by a team headed by Dr. W.P. Andrew Lee on March 14-15. The man still must undergo bone marrow infusion to reduce the need for traditional anti-rejection drugs. The drugs have side effects that include diabetes and [high blood pressure](#).

The hospital is not releasing the 24-year-old's identity or details of how he lost his right hand, but hopes to hold a news conference next week.

"For a hand, it takes quite some time to get full movement," said spokeswoman Amy Dugas Rose. "He has some movement, which is a good sign."

The Marine will undergo intense daily physical therapy for three months to gain movement, she said.

The surgery is the first of its kind at the Pittsburgh hospital network, and only the sixth in U.S. history. The other five have occurred at Jewish Hospital Heart and Lung Center of Louisville, Ky.

The first U.S. [hand transplant](#) was performed in January 1999 on Matthew David Scott, of New Jersey, who lost his hand in December

1985 in an M-80 blast.

The first hand transplant was done in Ecuador in 1964, but the patient's body rejected the hand after two weeks.

Worldwide, there have been about 32 other patients, and 40 hands transplanted.

UPMC has two people on its hand transplant waiting list, Rose said. One is a man waiting for a double hand transplant.

Finding donors - from cadavers - is challenging, Rose said. Besides matching tissue and blood type, the gender, size and skin tone also must match.

Surgery can last eight to 10 hours as doctors attach two major arteries, veins and repair multiple tendons and nerves.

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