

Cleveland Clinic does its second face transplant

November 18 2014, by Marilyn Marchione



In this September 2014 photo released Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2014, by the Cleveland Clinic, doctors work during transplant surgery to replace nearly the entire face of a middle-aged man severely disfigured in a car accident. It was the second face transplant performed at the hospital in Cleveland, Ohio. The recipient wished to remain anonymous. (AP Photo/Cleveland Clinic, Janine Sot)

Cleveland Clinic surgeons have replaced nearly the entire face of a middle-aged man severely disfigured in a car accident, the hospital announced Tuesday.

The operation in late September was the second face transplant by the Ohio [hospital](#). More than two dozen [face transplants](#) have been done around the world, starting in 2005 with a French woman mauled by her dog.

The hospital said the recipient wants to remain anonymous. In a statement released by the hospital Tuesday, the [man](#) said he is "grateful beyond words to the donor and his family for their amazing gift."

The patient became a candidate for a face transplant after many tries to reconstruct his face failed to improve his quality of life, the hospital said in a statement. The man had trouble breathing and speaking, and the transplant offered the chance to save the limited sight in his sole remaining eye.

Doctors transplanted about two-thirds of the scalp, the forehead, upper and lower eyelids, eye sockets, nose, upper cheeks, upper jaw, upper teeth, salivary glands and nerves, muscles and skin.

The patient is recovering well, breathing without a tube and is expected to be able to eat soon, the hospital said. He will need medicines for the rest of his life to prevent rejection of the new face.

The Cleveland Clinic did the nation's first face transplant, in December 2008, led by Dr. Maria Siemionow. She is now at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine and consulted with the Cleveland Clinic on the most recent face transplant, and co-led the operation with Dr. Frank Papay, chairman of the Dermatology and Plastic Surgery Institute at the clinic.

The U.S. Department of Defense is providing money for these surgeries in hopes of helping soldiers disfigured in battle. Recipients have included Charla Nash, a Connecticut woman who was mauled by a

chimpanzee. Her transplant was one of five done at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston; the University of Maryland Medical Center has also done one.

The University of Pittsburgh, the University of California, Los Angeles, and other medical centers also plan to offer face or hand transplants under the military program.

So far, only two face transplant-related deaths have been reported. One was a Chinese man who reportedly was not given or did not take medicines to prevent his body from rejecting his new face. The other was in Paris, a man who received a face and a [double hand transplant](#). He suffered a heart attack during surgery for a complication.

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