



BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL

June 2011

Face Transplant – FACT SHEET

For photos, animation, video and other materials visit:
brighamandwomens.org/facetransplantnash

- In May 2011, a team led by Dr. Bohdan Pomahac, performed the hospital's third full face transplant on patient Charla Nash of Connecticut. It is the fourth face transplant procedure (three full face transplants, one partial face transplant) done at BWH. The procedure took approximately 20 hours and involved a team of doctors, nurses, anesthesiologists, residents and many others across multiple disciplines.
- The surgical team also performed a double hand transplant, but the hands failed to thrive and were later removed.
- This is only the second time that a face and double hand transplant has been attempted. The first was in France in April 2009. That patient died from a heart attack during a follow up surgery.
- The date of the procedure will not be released to ensure the privacy of the donor.
- Charla Nash was mauled by a chimpanzee in 2009 resulting in the loss of her hands, lips, nose and eyes. The attack left her blind and disfigured.
- The donor patient and family wish to remain anonymous.
- The donor/recipient match was made based on gender, race, approximate age and blood type.
- The appearance of the donor is not likely to be replicated in the recipient. The underlying facial bones and muscle of the recipient will change the shape of the facial tissue graft from the donor and will largely determine its shape and final appearance.
- The area transplanted includes: the forehead, the nasal structure, the nose, lips, facial skin, muscles of facial animation and the nerves that power them and provide sensation are removed from the donor and grafted to the recipient.
- Consent for the donation of the tissue graft from the face was obtained by New England Organ Bank staff after conversations with the donor family. Registering as an organ and tissue donor on a driver's license is not accepted as consent for face donation; family consent is required.

- In March 2011, the BWH face transplant team, led by Dr. Bohdan Pomahac, a surgeon in the Division of Plastic Surgery and director of Plastic Surgery Transplantation, [performed the nation's first full face transplant](#) on patient Dallas Wiens. Approximately a month later in April 2011, the team performed the nation's second full face transplant on patient Mitch Hunter. In April, 2009, the team performed the first partial face transplant procedure in hospital's history, and the second partial face transplant in the U.S., on patient Jim Maki.
- In August 2010, BWH announced the creation of the [hand transplant program](#). This was the first hand transplant procedure at the hospital.
- There have been 70 hand transplants on 52 patients worldwide since 1999, according to The Composite Tissue Allotransplantation program, a partnership of physicians and researchers at Jewish Hospital Hand Care Center, Kleinert Kutz & Associates, and the University of Louisville, which performed the world's first successful double hand in 2009. The world's first hand transplant was attempted in Ecuador in 1964, but due to primitive anti-rejection medications, the patient rejected the hands two weeks after the procedure

Transplant History at BWH

Today, BWH is recognized as one of the world's leaders in transplantation.

In 1954, a BWH team led by Dr. Joseph Murray performed the first successful human organ donor transplant, a kidney, from one brother to another. In recognition of this achievement, Dr. Murray received the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1990.

The first heart transplant in New England was performed at BWH in 1984; this year, the 600th heart transplant was successfully performed at the hospital.

The first heart-lung transplant in Massachusetts was done at BWH in 1992

BWH also performed the first triple organ transplant and the first quintuple lung transplant in the United States in 1995 and 2004 respectively.

In 2006, BWH performed for the first time in its history 100 kidney transplants in one year and in 2008, more than 30 lung transplants were performed, putting BWH among the top hospitals in the country for volume.

To date, BWH has performed three full face transplant procedures and one partial face transplant, the most in the country.