

H52 Santa's Throat Cancer

To air week of December 24, 2007

Intro: Remember the story "Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer?" When bad weather almost stopped Santa from delivering gifts on Christmas Eve? Well, the same thing almost happened to the Santa you're about to meet. But instead of dealing with bad weather, this Santa faced an even bigger problem. Throat cancer. And just as the legendary light from that story guided Santa through the storm, a laser light helped this Santa weather the storm of cancer. More from Mayo Clinic.

Video

Total running time 1:33

Audio

"WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE FROM ME
THIS YEAR?"

LITTLE KATIE AND JEREMY DO
BELIEVE.

Jeremy

"A GARBAGE TRUCK."

Santa

"A BIG GARBAGE TRUCK?"

KATIE WANTS A PRETTY DRESS.

Katie

"PINK."

Santa

"HO-HO-HO"

Santa Claus

Had throat cancer

"I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANYTHING
MORE SATISFYING – YOU FEEL SO
BLESSED – THAN GIVING."

VO: Santa with kids

AND THIS SANTA'S HELPER SAYS
HE WAS GIVEN THE GIFT OF LIFE
WHEN DOCTORS AT MAYO CLINIC

Michael Hinni, M.D.
Mayo Clinic Surgeon

Standup
Vivien Williams
Reporting

To animation

FOUND AND REMOVED A
CANCEROUS TUMOR FROM THE
BASE OF HIS TONGUE. BUT
TREATMENT WASN'T EASY.
"THESE CANCERS AND THE
TREATMENTS FOR THEM
INTERFERE WITH A LOT OF THINGS
WE TAKE FOR GRANTED. FROM
BREATHING TO SPEAKING TO
EATING TO OUR APPEARANCE."
DR. HINNI SAYS THAT'S BECAUSE
THE TUMORS ARE OFTEN HARD TO
REACH. SURGERY CAN BE
DISFIGURING, CHEMO IS VERY
TOXIC AND RADIATION CAN
DAMAGE OTHER STRUCTURES IN
YOUR THROAT. BUT NOW, NEW
CO2 LASER TECHNOLOGY THAT
BOUNCES LIGHT ENERGY OFF
MIRRORS IS MAKING TREATMENT
EASIER FOR SOME PATIENTS.
FIRST DOCTORS GUIDE THE
FLEXIBLE FIBER THROUGH THE

MOUTH TO THE TUMOR. THE FIBER IS LINED WITH MANY LAYERS OF TINY MIRRORS. THESE MIRRORS BOUNCE THE LASER ENERGY IN ANY DIRECTION – EVEN AROUND CORNERS.

Michael Hinni, M.D.

“THAT ALLOWS US TO ACCESS TUMORS THAT WE COULDN’T QUITE GET TO BEFORE.” THE TECHNOLOGY ALLOWED SANTA TO AVOID TOXIC CHEMOTHERAPY. STILL, RECOVERY TOOK SOME TIME. BUT SANTA’S BACK. JUST IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS. FOR MEDICAL EDGE, I’M VIVIEN WILLIAMS.

Anchor tag:

After surgery Santa did have radiation because the cancer spread to his lymph nodes. But Dr. Hinni says his future looks bright for many Christmases to come. For more information, Visit our Website at...**[STATIONS: Per the licensing agreement, please provide a link from your station's website to <http://www.mayoclinic.org> or voice tag "mayoclinic.org" for more information.]**