

119 VAD for Lifetime Use

To air week of May 12, 2008

Intro: Right now there are close to 5-million people in America suffering from heart failure. Many of these people would benefit from a heart transplant, but because most of them are over age 65, they're often not eligible for that life-saving operation. But now, doctors at Mayo Clinic are studying a device that is not only keeping people with heart failure alive longer, but it's also giving them a better quality of life.

Video

Total running time 1:37

**Verna Schrombeck
Has Heart Failure**

Verna Schrombeck

Audio

AFTER 76 YEARS OF MUSIC, END-STAGE HEART FAILURE HAS SILENCED VERNA SCHROMBECK'S PIANO.

"I COULD NOT SIT AT THE PIANO. I WAS NOT HEALTHY ENOUGH. I WASN'T STRONG ENOUGH. AND MY FINGERS WOULD NOT FUNCTION."

"I WAS JUST IN VERY, VERY SERIOUS CONDITION."
BUT VERNA IS BACK AT THE KEYBOARD THANKS TO A DEVICE IMPLANTED AT MAYO CLINIC. IT'S CALLED A VENTRICULAR ASSIST DEVICE, OR VAD.

Margaret Redfield, M.D.
Mayo Clinic Cardiology

“THE VAD THERAPIES ARE FOR A PERSON WHO HAS AN ENLARGED HEART THAT DOESN’T CONTRACT WELL. IT DOESN’T SQUEEZE AND PUMP BLOOD TO THE REST OF THE BODY.”

CARDIOLOGIST DR. MARGARET REDFIELD TEAMED UP WITH SURGEON JOHN PARK.

John Park, M.D.
Mayo Clinic Surgeon
To animation

“IT’S A HEART ASSISTING PUMP.”

DURING OPEN HEART SURGERY, DR. PARK IMPLANTED THE DEVICE NEAR VERA’S HEART. IT’S CONNECTED TO THE HEART’S MAIN PUMPING CHAMBER (THE LEFT VENTRICLE) AND TO THE MAIN ARTERY CARRYING BLOOD OUT TO THE BODY. A SMALL WIRE EXTENDS OUTSIDE OF HER BODY AND HOOKS TO AN EXTERNAL BATTERY PACK. WHEN TURNED ON, THE PUMP TAKES OVER MUCH

OF HER HEART'S WORK AND
DELIVERS A CONTINUOUS FLOW
OF BLOOD TO HER BODY.

Soon John Park, M.D.
Mayo Clinic Surgeon

“IT COULD EFFECTIVELY REPLACE
MOST OF THE HEART FUNCTION
FOR PEOPLE SUFFERING FROM
HEART FAILURE.”

Verna Schrombeck
Has heart failure

“I FEEL ALMOST SO NORMAL THAT I
WANT TO GET UP AND DO THINGS
WITHOUT REMEMBERING THAT I 'M
CARRYING THIS VAD EQUIPMENT
WITH ME.”

BUT VERNA SAYS CARRYING THE
BATTERY PACK, WHICH SHE
CHANGES EVERY 5 HOURS OR SO,
IS A SMALL PRICE TO PAY FOR LIFE
AND MUSIC. FOR MEDICAL EDGE,
I'M VIVIEN WILLIAMS.

Anchor tag:

VAD therapy used to be used to keep people alive while they wait for a heart transplant. Now it's being studied for use in people like Verna – as life-long therapy. Dr. Park says the technology is relatively new so they don't have long term results. But there have been people on the device for 7 and ½ years. 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.]**

