

Mayo Clinic Minute

Hereditary hemorrhagic telangiectasia

Video	Audio
Neeta Pai	"I like to do charity work."
Vivien Williams	When you watch Neeta Pai in action ...
Neeta Pai	"It brings me a lot of joy."
Vivien Williams	... you'd never guess that not long ago, she almost died from a debilitating bleeding disease.
Neeta Pai	"My first symptom was a nosebleed."
Vivien Williams	Not just any nosebleed.
Neeta Pai	"My nosebleeds were so severe. It would be just gushing like you would turn on the tap."
Vivien Williams	They happened constantly and for no reason. Neeta would faint from blood loss.
Neeta Pai	"Any minor things would make my nose bleed. If I pinched my nose hard, the blood would go up into my ears, up in my head, and, of course, down the throat to the stomach. And my mouth was full of blood. Nobody could stop it."
Vivien Williams	For years, she suffered, with no answers to her questions of why.
Neeta Pai	"Oh, they were terrible. I had no life. Absolutely no life."
Vivien Williams	The bleeds worsened, and after one extreme episode, Neeta went into cardiac arrest. Her heart stopped.
Neeta Pai	"After that experience, I didn't want to

	live."
Vivien Williams	Hope came to Neeta when she met Dr. Vivek Iyer at Mayo Clinic. He diagnosed her with a hereditary condition called "HHT."
Vivek Iyer, M.D. Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine Mayo Clinic	"HHT stands for hereditary hemorrhagic telangiectasia."
Vivien Williams	People with the disorder develop tufts or tangles in their blood vessels.
Vivek Iyer, M.D. Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine Mayo Clinic	"It basically affects blood vessels in almost every part of the body, and the most major areas of concern are the brain, the lungs, the nose, and the intestines and the liver."
Vivien Williams VO: images of tangles	And these tangles tend to bleed spontaneously. In fact, Dr. Iyer and his colleagues found that bleeding is the most important reason for hospitalization among HHT patients in the U.S. Dr. Iyer says frequent nosebleeds in these patients reduce quality of life and can be lifethreatening.
Vivek Iyer, M.D.	"They can be catastrophic and can lead to death or severe disability."
Vivien Williams	But Dr. Iyer and his team have used a medication to help stop the bleeding. It's called Avastin, or bevacizumab — a cancer drug that prevents tumors from growing new blood vessels.
Vivek Iyer, M.D.	"We took that idea from the cancer world ... and it has worked out really, really well."
Vivien Williams	Dr. Iyer tested the drug in a study, and results show it can be life-changing for patients like Neeta. It's administered via infusion. Neeta says the medication has saved her.
Neeta Pai	"Since then, I have had no bleeds. It's given me my life back."

Vivien Williams	Neeta pays it forward with her volunteer work, and she appreciates every single moment.
Neeta Pai	"I'm so full of gratitude. I count my blessings every day."
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Vivien Williams.