

New treatments options for those with liver cancer

Intro: Sharon Silverman loves to travel. But after doctors in her hometown of Pensacola, Florida, diagnosed her with [hepatocellular carcinoma](#) and told her there were no treatment options, Sharon knew she had to take one more trip. Her destination: Mayo Clinic — where a unique radiation procedure opened the door to future adventures.

Reporter DeeDee Stiepan shares her story.

VIDEO	AUDIO
	<i>Sound of airplane overhead.</i>
Sharon Silverman	“My passion has always been travel. I’ve been traveling since I was 17 years old.”
	Sharon Silverman’s passport is full of stamps.
Sharon Silverman	“Killarney.”
	Her photo albums filled with images of her world travels.
Sharon Silverman	“Is this Jasper?”
	But when she was diagnosed with an autoimmune condition where her body began attacking its own bile ducts, the future was uncertain.
Sharon Silverman	“Eventually I developed cancer, hepatocellular carcinoma.”
	Sharon’s adventures were cut short when doctors in Pensacola, Florida, told her to get her affairs in order.
Title: Sharon Silverman Patient Mayo Clinic	“Because of the nature of my liver disease even if they were able to operate and remove those cancers that that really would not stop the problem, that those cancers will come back.”
Sharon Silverman	“I was referred to an oncological surgeon who said, ‘You will never be transplanted. You will not meet the criteria.’”
	Sharon knew it was time for another opinion.

	In 2017, Sharon drove six hours to Jacksonville FL to meet with Dr. Beau Toskich, an interventional radiologist and oncologist, to learn more about a minimally invasive treatment for liver cancer. But first, doctors had to look at the liver's blood supply.
Title: Beau Toskich, M.D. Interventional Radiology Mayo Clinic	"It's a very rigorous study where we perform little, tiny CT scans of each individual blood vessel in that patient's liver and we put together a puzzle where we can decide which vessels need to be treated and which ones can be spared."
Animation of Y-90 therapy	Dr. Toskich determined Sharon was a candidate for radio embolization, a minimally invasive treatment, where tiny glass beads filled with a radioactive isotope called yttrium-90, are injected into the blood supply of the tumor. Over time, the tumor dies but the healthy part of the liver remains.
Animation available.	"He offered me hope with Y-90, yttrium-90."
Sharon Silverman	"When we saw her in follow-up, we saw that at least per her MRIs, that the tumor had shrunk in its entirety in terms of there was no residual active blood supply to the tumor."
	If the tumor continued to respond to the Y-90, a transplant was a possibility.
Dr. Toskich	"Over the next year, we continued to see her tumor shrink and shrink until eventually it was within transplant criteria."
Sharon Silverman	"It's only because of Dr. Toskich and his miraculous I-90 [sic] that I was able to come back to the point where I was eligible."
	Two weeks after being listed for transplant, Sharon got the call.
Sharon Silverman	"It was a real surprise when at 7:00 in the morning the transplant person called and said, 'Get in the car and come!' And I said, 'What? I don't have – I don't have a suitcase packed!'"
	On Nov. 14, 2018, Sharon received a new liver.
Sharon Silverman	"I feel like a Mayo miracle because I owe my life to Mayo."
	To celebrate her new lease on life, Sharon planned an adventure with several friends.

	Then COVID-19 struck and Sharon's travel plans were put on hold. After months of staying close to home, Sharon's eager to hit the road again in 2021.
Sharon Silverman	"There are four of us and we all have traveled together before. It's going to be a blast."
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network... <i>Laughter</i> ... I'm DeeDee Stiepan.

Tag: *Despite COVID-19, Sharon continues to do well and will maintain annual follow-ups at Mayo Clinic, as do most transplant patients. She recently celebrated her 76th birthday and is planning a trip to Boston and Canada with her friends.*