MAYO CLINIC

Title: Regeneration after rare head and neck cancer

Video	**Audio**
Total running time [2:52] VIDEO	/// AUDIO
	"We enjoyed a very active lifestyle, golf, tennis. If you were to ask my family and friends or inner circle, they would all say that I was probably the healthiest person in our circle."
	But Alison O'Neill knew something was wrong when a bump on her right cheek wouldn't go away.
	"And they thought it was a clogged oil gland."
	She asked for a biopsy. The result changed her life. Initially, it came back as nonaggressive cancer. When she came to Mayo Clinic to have it removed, a more in-depth biopsy revealed angiosarcoma, an aggressive, potentially deadly cancer of the blood vessels.
Title: **Alison O'Neill,** **Patient with cancer**	"The rug just comes out from underneath you. When you're faced with mortality, it's such a surprise. And in that moment, what you want to live for is the people that you love most."
	Dr. Brittany Howard, a head and neck surgeon, suggested they remove it immediately to improve chances of survival.
Title: **Brittany E. Howard, M.D.,** **Otolaryngology — Head and Neck Surgery** **Mayo Clinic**	"So we took off approximately the size of a baseball off her right cheek as far as actual diameter. And then all the way down to her facial muscles"

	Next came the challenge of healing the wound and rebuilding her cheek using skin from her face, neck and collarbone.
	"Even when you have someone who's had their entire face and neck rearranged, has well over 100 stitches, the strength of the human spirit is the one thing that always comes through. She was amazing."
	Hyaluronic acid injections were the first step toward restoring the natural fullness of her face.
	"You reach a breaking point, you hit a wall, and you want to stop. And Dr. Howard told me at one of those points, the body has amazing abilities to heal."
	Alison had a type of laser treatment known as broadband light therapy to regenerate the skin. Lasers are used to reduce redness and help her transferred skin blend naturally.
	"We use some wavelengths targeted at the color change in her skin" (the browns we see): you're actually resetting the cells to a younger state, where they're expressing younger genes producing younger proteins."
	Alison considers her recovery a work in progress. She hopes her story of survival will encourage others.
	"What my body has done in terms of healing is amazing. I've been blessed beyond measure with my husband, and I wanted to live life to the fullest with him "
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Susan Buckles