

Surgery helps Chuck Smith avoid heart transplant, meet new grandson

VIDEO	AUDIO
Chuck Smith Patient	"I was very active. I ran 13 marathons from 40 to 47 years old, qualified for the Boston Marathon, ran the Boston Marathon twice."
	A heart attack never crossed Chuck Smith's mind. But he started experiencing a sharp pain in his chest in August 2019. Chuck's wife recognized something was wrong and brought him to a hospital near their home in Northeast Florida.
	"They put me on an EKG, within five minutes, I'm on a helicopter. The last I remember is the helicopter door opening and two paddles on my chest."
	Chuck's heart was damaged and unable to pump blood through his body. The condition, called cardiogenic shock, caused his other organs to fail. After he was placed on a device to keep blood pumping, Chuck was transferred to Mayo Clinic, where Dr. Parag Patel, a Mayo Clinic transplant medicine specialist, and team considered the possibility of a heart transplant.
Parag Patel, M.D. Transplantation Medicine Mayo Clinic	"Sometimes with medical therapies and with advanced technological therapies, we can actually help the heart recover on its own."
	Chuck spent 20 days in the hospital after complex heart surgery, avoiding a transplant. His wife, children and friends motivated recovery.
Chuck Smith Patient	"I wanted to live. I know that. I was fighting so hard to live. I do remember that and – I said I'm not, you know – I was worried about them."

	Not long after walking out of the hospital, Chuck was walking down the aisle at his son's wedding.
	"They got married in our backyard in July. They're home visiting for Christmas, and Christmas Eve, they shared they were pregnant. What a glorious day that was."
Parag Patel, M.D. Transplantation Medicine Mayo Clinic	"You can take people who almost didn't make it and actually allow him to live and give him back to his family."
	Chuck has laced-up his running shoes again — not for a marathon course, but to stay in step with his year-old grandson.
	"It's just unbelievable to see my grandson. It's just such a blessing, and he walks with me. Life couldn't be better."
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Alex Osiadacz (Oh-side-us).