

Mayo Clinic Minute: Saving more lives by expanding the donor pool

Video	Audio
	On average, 17 people die each day waiting for a transplant, which is why expanding the donor pool has never been more important.
	Traditionally, donor hearts were retrieved from patients who were declared brain dead, but their hearts remained beating. However, game-changing organ perfusion systems, such as "heart in a box," have allowed for increased use of donation after circulatory death, where the heart stops beating.
Mauricio Villavicencio, M.D. Heart and Lung Transplantation Mayo Clinic	"The donor has their circulatory death, their heart has to stop, there is a five-minute waiting period, declaration of death, and then we take the heart out and put it in a box and perfuse it over there."
	Once the heart is reanimated, the function of the organ is assessed for transplant. The system allows for the organ to stay warm and metabolically active, extending the time between retrieval and transplant by several hours.
	"We have had three, four, five, six hours of perfusion on the device."
	"If you have four hours, you could go essentially around all North America with that."
	Something else that's helping to expand the donor pool is the new generation of antivirals that allow for the safe transplantation of organs from hepatitis C-positive donors. A significant source of donor organs that, before, would have been discarded.
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm DeeDee Stiepan.