

Double-lung transplant inspires mom to educate and support others

Video

Audio

ANCHOR LEAD	Barbara Brown was working in New York City when the Sept. 11 attacks occurred. Exposure to toxins led to years of struggling to breathe and searching for answers. Alex Osiadacz (oh-SIGH-dus) has her story.
Barbara Brown Patient	"I was meeting my girlfriends for breakfast. She actually worked in the World Trade Center. When the actual plane hit the tower, I was quite a distance away from it. I wasn't right up on the towers, but I was where you could see it."
	What followed that day would change Barbara's health and life forever.
Barbara Brown Patient	"You know, you had the toxins and all of this stuff that were in your lungs."
	Over time, Barbara started to notice changes in her health. Then, a pivotal moment in 2006 while being a mom to an active 2-year-old girl.
Barbara Brown Patient	"She jumped up in my arms, and when she jumped up in my arms, I kind of fell backwards. And I fell down, and I couldn't hold her. And that was the first big thing with my lungs."
	Barbara was diagnosed with interstitial lung disease, where inflammation and scarring make it difficult to breathe.
Barbara Brown Patient	"I looked at this little girl that I had, and I said, 'You know, if I'm going to fight, I'm going to fight for her, you know.' And so that's what I chose to do."
	She spent much of the next decade searching for a transplant program that would be the right fit. Then, Mayo Clinic and Dr. Tathagat Narula (tat-HA-get nah-RULE-ah), a transplant pulmonologist, entered her life.

Tathagat Narula, M.B.B.S., M.D. Transplantation Medicine Mayo Clinic	"Barbara came through our doors, referred to us from an outside provider, with a disease that was fairly advanced. She was on a lot of oxygen, very, very sick."
	After qualifying for a double-lung transplant and spending time on the waiting list, Barbara got the call in April 2017.
Barbara Brown Patient	"It's the scariest thing in the world because now you're looking at everybody and you're like, 'This is it! This, this is really it!'"
	Recovery would be long, but eventually, Barbara was back on her feet and breathing without assistance.
Barbara Brown Patient	"Do I look like someone who's been through a double-lung transplant? No. I just like to think that I'm happy. If someone says I look like a happy person, then that's what I would prefer looking like."
	The journey has inspired her to share her story.
Barbara Brown Patient	"I decided that I was going to really write about my experience."
Tathagat Narula, M.B.B.S., M.D. Transplantation Medicine Mayo Clinic	"She has had this opportunity to see her daughter grow up, go to college, you know. Barbara is writing a book to share her journey, to share her story with the wider audience. What more can you ask for?"
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Alex Osiadacz.