

# Face Transplant Recipient Making Sounds, Swallowing

Sydney Lupkin

A Polish man who received a life-saving face transplant just three weeks after a work accident is already making sounds and practicing swallowing, his doctors said.



The 33-year-old man, identified only as Grzegorz, underwent a 27-hour operation May 15 to reconstruct his jaw, nose, cheeks, and eye sockets, which were then swathed with skin from a deceased donor -- a procedure previously reserved for patients who are years out from their disfiguring injuries.

"Usually, the recipients have to wait between one and seven years," said Dr. Adam Maciejewski, who headed the team of surgeons at the Cancer Center and Institute of Oncology in Gliwice, explaining that Grzegorz's injury was particularly extreme. "For obvious reasons, we had to act much faster, as we were saving this man's life."

Grzegorz is making "very good progress" and even got out of bed over the weekend, Maciejewski told The Associated Press. Although he's able to make some sounds, he communicates through writing because the tracheotomy tube that helps him breathe does not allow him to speak.

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