

Ground-breaking multi-organ transplant saves girl, 9, after 'monster' tumour devours SIX of her organs

By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

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When a rare and relentless tumour devoured six of nine-year-old Alannah Shevenell's main organs, her chances of survival looked slim.

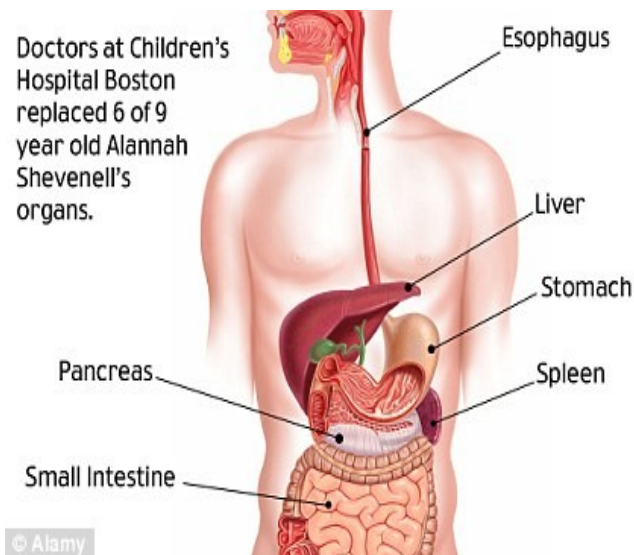
Concern for her life grew as the tumour fast approached her heart and put pressure on her esophagus making it impossible for her to eat.

Chemotherapy and surgery both failed to have an impact but thanks to a ground-breaking six-organ transplant at Children's Hospital Boston, she is now set to make a steady recovery.

Alannah of Maine received a new esophagus, liver, stomach, spleen, pancreas and small intestine after losing her own to the myofibroblastic tumour.

Hospital officials say it was the first known esophageal transplant in the world and the largest number of organs transplanted into a person at one time in New England, reports the Portland Press Herald.

'That tumor was like a monster, It was sticky. It was slimy. It was like an octopus, reaching out and consuming her organs,' Alannah's grandmother Debi Skolas told the Herald.



This graph shows what organs were replaced in the 14 hour surgery after the 'monster' tumour spread in her body

The multi-organ transplant was her last hope, but she had to wait a year for a suitable donor.

'We needed to remove all the organs because the tumor had grown to basically encircle the blood supply,' Dr Heung Bae Kim, director of the hospital's Pediatric Transplant Center, told ABC News.

In October doctors eventually found a donor and Dr Kim led his team through the complicated 14-and-a-half hour surgery.

'We spent about two-thirds of the time removing the tumor from the organs we were leaving,' he said told ABC.

The team transplanted the new organs in as a package and waited for them to react.

'We were so happy. It was technically very successful. The organs looked good.' Dr Kim told ABC.

Alannah was so used to being fed through tubes, doctors said she had lost her appetite.

'But on the weekend she started eating again. And yesterday she had some cake.' Dr Kim said.

Alannah is now back at the home she shares with her grandparents, but she will have to have regular check-ups throughout her life.

'There is a risk that she'll need another transplant down the road. And if there were any tumor cells left behind, there is a risk it could come back,' Dr Kim warned, according to ABC News.

Alannah will also need to take anti-rejection drugs for the rest of her life.

'Aside from those medications, children usually do quite well and lead normal lives. And she's a spunky little kid.' Dr Kim told ABC News.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2095169/Ground-breaking-organ-transplant-saves-Alannah-Shevenell-9-monster-tumour.html>