

Arizona TB Patient Robert Daniels Undergoes Surgery

JULY 31, 2007

DENVER — Robert Daniels, a multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis patient at National Jewish Medical and Research Center, will undergo surgery Tuesday to remove his entire left lung. The surgery is a complement to his antibiotic therapy and should improve Mr. Daniels' chances of recovery.

"Since Mr. Daniels' arrival at National Jewish, we have been able to adjust his antibiotic therapy to reduce side effects while maintaining the effectiveness of the medications," said Gwen Huitt, MD, Director of the Adult Infectious Disease Care Unit at National Jewish. "Now is the right time for surgery. The surgery will remove the majority of tuberculosis organisms infecting his lung, leaving fewer for the antibiotics to kill. It will also remove damaged tissue, which provides an environment where the organisms thrive and medications are less effective."

John D. Mitchell, MD, Chief of General Thoracic Surgery at the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center, will perform the surgery Tuesday afternoon at the University of Colorado Hospital. The surgery is expected to take three to four hours. Physicians expect Mr. Daniels to remain at the University of Colorado Hospital for about a week before returning to National Jewish, where he will remain for another two to four weeks. Mr. Daniels will continue antibiotic therapy for approximately two years after his surgery.

Dr. Huitt said that Mr. Daniels should enjoy a full life even with one lung, although he may have to cut back on his more vigorous activities. She did note, however, that actor John Wayne lived for 15 years and made several movies after having one entire lung removed as a treatment for lung cancer.

Shortly before Mr. Daniels' surgery, representatives from Russian government visited Mr. Daniels to wish him well and to express their support for him. Mr. Daniels has dual citizenship in the United States and Russia.

Before coming to National Jewish, Mr. Daniels had been held for almost a year in a locked medical ward in Arizona after he reportedly failed to comply with physicians' orders to wear a protective mask in public.

Future inquiries about the surgery should be addressed to the Office of Public Relations at the University of Colorado Hospital at 303-724-1520.

National Jewish Health is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 121 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit the [media resources page](#).

Media Contacts

Our team is available to arrange interviews, discuss events and story ideas.

William Allstetter
303.398.1002
allstetterw@njhealth.org

Adam Dormuth
303.398.1082
dormutha@njhealth.org