

Woman outfitted with robotic arm

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The Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago has fitted a woman who lost her arm in a motorcycle accident with a robotic replacement.

Claudia Mitchell is the first woman to receive a robotic arm from the institute, the Chicago Sun-Times reported Thursday. Five other amputees, all men, have been outfitted with the arms.

To give her control of the arm, Mitchell underwent a 5-hour surgery to graft five nerves that previously lead into her arm into her chest muscles, the Arlington Heights (Ill.) Daily Herald reported. The nerves now create electrical charges in the chest muscles that send signals to the robotic arm.

Dr. Gregory Dumanian, who performed the surgery, said it was more complicated with a female patient because he and his colleagues had to take special care not to damage the breast tissue.

"I can open a jar. I can hold my Dagwood sandwich. I can hold fruit and vegetables while I cut them up. I can peel a banana," Mitchell said. "This makes daily life much easier, especially in the kitchen."

The U.S. Department of Defense plans to begin offering the robotic limbs to wounded soldiers later this year, the Chicago Tribune reported.

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