

MAKING A DIFFERENCE ONE PATIENT AT A TIME

Sitting on a Treatment for Traumatic Brain Injury

In 2011, life was good for Jackie Moore. With a background in chemical engineering and sales, she had a successful career. She was happily married, active and loved showing horses. In a brief moment, that all changed.



While waiting in her car for a school bus to unload children, Jackie's auto was hit from behind and pushed under a sport utility vehicle. She escaped with no broken bones, bruising or bleeding, and suffered only a momentary loss of consciousness. It was the unseen injuries; however, that would prove to be devastating.

The jarring movements Jackie's brain endured left her with impaired vision, cognitive difficulties, short and long term memory issues and several other physical symptoms. She lost her ability to perform even simple tasks including reading, counting money and having a basic conversation. She could no longer work or drive, and was almost completely dependent on her husband Mike. She felt her brain was not communicating with the rest of her body, leaving her as a shell of her former self.

"The more waste my lymphatic system carries out of my body the stronger I get...I'm almost who I was before my brain injury."

– JACKIE MOORE, TBI SURVIVOR

The initial diagnosis was a mild traumatic brain injury (TBI), often referred to as a concussion. Unfortunately, Jackie found her symptoms persisted more than 12 months after the accident — something experienced by approximately 15 percent of those who suffer TBI. She and her husband spent the next few years desperately seeking treatment options.

After numerous doctor visits and tests that failed to help, Jackie was able to participate in TBI clinical trials at the National Institute of Health. Although she worked with 13 different specialists and three therapists, as of April 2014, her activity was still limited to two hours a day. She nonetheless learned techniques to help alleviate some of the daily complications associated with TBI.

Spurred by their experiences trying to find help for her condition and the lack of resources where she lived, Jackie and her husband established the Traumatic Brain Injury Resource Center (TBIRC) in August 2014. The first of its kind in Ohio, the non-profit organization connects TBI survivors, their caregivers and families to resources and muchneeded support.

Starting up and running the center has been a challenge for Jackie, who initially could only work in short two to three hour increments and continues to struggle with cognition and vision issues. The stress on her body combined with the damage from her brain injury, landed her in intensive care for 10 days in December 2014 with total left side paralysis. More rehabilitation and pain management followed.

SOLUTION

Robert Wright, a Joerns Healthcare representative, happened to live by the new Traumatic Brain Injury Center. One day he decided to stop in to see what they did at the resource center. He was greeted by Jackie, who introduced herself as the director and a TBI survivor. Robert told her a little about Joerns Healthcare and then started discussing the Dolphin™ Fluid Immersion Simulation® wheelchair cushion. As Robert recounts, “Jackie’s eyes immediately lit up as I explained the principle behind it.”

The Dolphin Fluid Immersion Simulation (FIS) technology simulates a fluid environment, maintaining near normal blood flow, minimizing soft tissue distortion and optimizing tissue oxygenation. Through continuous analysis and adjustment, Dolphin FIS autonomically detects and autocorrects the surface based on weight, 3D surface area and any patient movement.

Jackie was eager to try the cushion if for no other reason than the pain relief it could offer. Robert was able to make it happen, and Jackie says it has drastically changed her life. Initially, she sat on the cushion three to four hours per day. After several weeks, she reduced her time on the cushion to two to three hours per day. Jackie says she sits on the cushion for approximately 30 minutes every morning to start her day and then uses the cushion throughout the day as she sits at her desk to work, always drinking plenty of water while using the cushion. The Dolphin FIS technology helps keep her blood flowing smoothly and engages her lymphatic system. As a result, her bloodstream delivers much-needed oxygen and nutrients to her brain. Meanwhile, waste is drained from her brain by what has been dubbed the lymphatic system by neuroscientists at the University of Rochester Medical Center. “The more waste my lymphatic system carries out of my body the stronger I get,” Jackie says. “My vision is becoming better. My cognition is improving. My husband has noticed the differences in my physical and mental well-being. I’m almost who I was before my brain injury.”

While part of her progress can be attributed to her own determination, Jackie says, “I know this cushion is doing more for my overall health than just keeping my backside comfortable.” As a TBI survivor, I know this cushion will not heal me to pre-injury status. However, I do know that this cushion has improved my quality of life, reduced my pain and I continue to see improvement in my cognition, vision and memory deficits.

She is convinced that the science behind the Dolphin cushion holds great promise for other TBI survivors and plans to advocate for its consideration in TBI treatment modalities.

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