

Continual, Effective Pain Relief

When intractable pain threatens quality of life, a simple, implantable device can dispense strong pain medication without affecting mental clarity.

It's been a rough nine years for Frank Curcio. That's when he had the first of his ten back surgeries.

"I have degenerative spinal discs," explains Frank. "My first surgery was performed in New York and even after several months of rehab I still experienced a lot of back pain."

"I went to one pain management doctor after another, but never found any real relief. My doctors wouldn't prescribe effective pain medications for me. It was like they thought everyone who wanted pain medication had to be a drug addict or something."

Frank moved to Florida, and it wasn't long before a second herniated disc sent him looking for a surgeon in his new hometown.

"I asked around and the name of Dr. Donald Moyer at Southwest Florida Neurosurgical Associates kept coming up," recalls Frank. "I went to see him, and he's been my surgeon ever since."

To help Frank deal with his pain, Dr. Moyer referred Frank to Peter S. Schreiber, DO, of Southwest Florida Rehab & Pain Management Associates, who is board certified in pain management and rehabilitation.

Methodical approach

"Pain management is one of the most challenging aspects of medicine," observes Dr. Schreiber, "and back pain can be particularly intractable. That's because each patient responds differently to any given therapy, and some patients develop scar tissue following back surgery that can itself impinge on nerves and generate pain."

Dr. Schreiber worked with Frank to design a medication regimen to handle his back pain, but Frank's degenerative disc disease kept causing new problems that required additional surgeries.

Frank also developed a spinal cyst that pushed against his nerves. This, too, required surgery.

By 2004, Frank's pain was so intense that he could no longer walk. He couldn't even sit up — he had to lie down almost all the time. His leg muscles cramped uncontrollably. Too disabled to work, Frank found himself homebound, unable even to drive a car.

"I was taking eighty milligrams of OxyContin four times a day," shares Frank. "That's a boatload of medication! And still Dr. Schreiber didn't give up on me."

"Frank, he told me, *I'm going to see this through. We will get you up and walking again.*"

Turnaround!

Dr. Schreiber suggested one more surgery — Frank's tenth — to implant an intraspinal pump.

"This device delivers low doses of pain-relieving medication such as baclofen or morphine to the space surrounding the spinal cord," describes Dr. Schreiber. "Continuous, targeted doses of the medication provide relief without the clouding of consciousness associated with systemic therapies. Side effects such as sedation, euphoria or addiction do not occur with the pump, and as the patient's needs change, the dosage can be increased or decreased."

"We can combine the pump with oral medications for increased comfort and a smoother transition to



FHCN PHOTO BY BRIAN GLENN

BEST THING THAT'S HAPPENED. That's how Frank describes the morphine pump Dr. Schreiber prescribed to control Frank's persistent back pain.

freedom from back pain," adds Dr. Schreiber, "and the pump is checked and refilled periodically in a simple procedure that takes just a few moments."

"That morphine pump is the best thing that's ever happened to me," proclaims Frank. "I've reduced my daily dose of OxyContin to just forty milligrams twice a day — one fourth of what I used to take — and my quality of life is so much better!"

"I've had this pump for over a year, now, and I'm able to walk, drive, even stand up to cook dinner, vacuum, and wash the clothes. It's those small things we take for granted that mean so much once you get them back."

"If you don't live with chronic pain, you can't know how important it is to have a doctor who just won't give up on you. Let

me tell you: having someone like Dr. Schreiber on your side means everything." **FHCN**—Billie S. Noakes

Relief at last

The staff at Southwest Florida Rehab & Pain Management Associates welcomes your questions and comments regarding this article. For additional information or to schedule a consultation, please call or visit one of their conveniently located offices: in Fort Myers at (239) 432-0774, 12700 Creekside Ln., Suite 301; in Cape Coral at (239) 772-5577, 632 Del Prado Blvd., N; and in Bonita Springs at (239) 498-1204, 26800 S. Tamiami Trail, Suite 340.

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James P. Weiner, MD, is board certified by the American Board of Anesthesiology. He received his medical degree and completed his residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation at Eastern Virginia Medical School, Norfolk, and completed an anesthesia residency and received fellowship training in pain management at the Naval Hospital, Portsmouth, VA. He also received fellowship training in anesthesia at Bowman-Gray Medical Center, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC. He is a member of the American Association of Electrodiagnostic Medicine, American Association of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, American Society of Anesthesiology, Florida Medical Society, Florida Society of Anesthesiology, International Association for the Study of Pain, and International Spinal Injection Society. He has published extensively in his areas of expertise.



Peter S. Schreiber, DO, is board certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation. He completed his undergraduate studies in microbiology at the University of Florida, Gainesville, and received his medical degree from Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine, Davie, FL. He served his internship and a combined residency in internal medicine and physical medicine and rehabilitation at Case Western Reserve University/MetroHealth Medical Center, Cleveland, OH. Dr. Schreiber is a member of the American Medical Association, American Osteopathic Association, and American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.



Keith S. Susko, MD, is board certified by the American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation with subspecialty certification in pain medicine. Dr. Susko completed his undergraduate studies, with an emphasis in biomedical engineering, at the University of Arizona College of Engineering. He earned his medical degree and completed his medical internship and his residency in physical medicine, serving as chief resident, at Eastern Virginia Medical School, Norfolk. While in Virginia, Dr. Susko founded the medical school's Habitat for Humanity student volunteer group, organizing workdays for volunteer labor and assisting in the construction of homes for the needy. He has developed numerous presentations and lectures concerning myofascial trigger point evaluations, osteoporosis, electromyography, cerebral palsy, and low back pain. Dr. Susko is a member of the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Association of Academic Physiatrists, American Academy of Pain Management, American Medical Association, and American Academy of Electrodiagnostic Medicine.



Robert D. Mehrberg, MD, is a board-certified physiatrist, certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation, as well as in electrodiagnostic medicine. He completed his undergraduate studies and earned his medical degree at Tulane University, New Orleans, LA. He served his internship and his residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation at Eastern Virginia Medical School, Norfolk, where he was appointed chief resident. Dr. Mehrberg has lectured on, written, or coauthored numerous articles, abstracts, presentations, and publications concerned with the treatment and well being of rehabilitation patients. Dr. Mehrberg is a member of the American Association of Electrodiagnostic Medicine, American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and Association of Academic Physiatrists.



Pierre R. Hyppolite, MD, is fellowship-trained in spinal cord injury through the University of Miami's Jackson Memorial Hospital/Miami VA Medical Center. He is a graduate of the Faculte De Medicine Et De Pharmacie Universite D'etat d'Haiti, where he earned his medical degree and served his medical internship. Dr. Hyppolite attended Yale University School of Public Health and served an internal medicine internship at the New York Medical College's Our Lady of Mercy Medical Center. He completed his residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation at NYMC's Metropolitan Hospital Center. Dr. Hyppolite is an associate member of the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and the American Paraplegia Society. He is fluent in English, French, and Creole.

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