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– Tess T.*

Diagnosed with chronic neuropathic pain, Tess, a young energetic cross-country runner and a travel enthusiast was forced to put her successful career in global hospitality on hold. When Tess first started experiencing back pain at 11 years of age, specialists believed the pain was caused by her sporting activities. A CT scan showed, in the lower part of her spine were extensively deteriorated and had stress fractures resembling those of an 80 year old.

Tess' symptoms included sharp pains in the lower right side of her back and shooting pain down the side of her leg regardless of the way she stood. Sleep was also greatly impacted, with the pain worsening at night after an active day.

The pain forced Tess on an exploratory path adopting numerous therapies and medications with ranging success and multiple side effects including what Tess describes as "an awful foggy brain, affecting her memory and nerves." The treatments made her tired, housebound and caused weight gain, yet without them she could not function. In just 12 months, Tess was hospitalised more than 25 times. "People used to think I was crazy when I said I would rather amputate my leg than live my life in pain. It is beyond exhausting being in pain 24 hours a day."

Motivated by information she found on spinal cord stimulation, Pain Australia's Facebook community and support from her family, Tess was assessed for suitability and received a permanent implant of a neurostimulator to help manage her pain.

"I was hanging onto any glimmer of hope, as I had nothing to lose. I was not even fearful of the actual surgery. I just wanted to be out of pain for some relief." The procedure takes approximately five hours with doctors waking the patient up during the procedure so the coverage of pain relief can be enhanced. Six weeks after her procedure Tess said "I am recovering really well. I can walk properly without limping or wanting to cut my leg off. I have a bounce in my step I have not had for years."

It is the simple things that Tess has enjoyed reclaiming the most. "I have been able to have a shower without crying and go for long walks over an hour. I can ride my bike and re-start my Pilates, which is something I used to really love doing. I am able to cook dinner now, and do things like baking and cleaning the house. These are simple things, I could not do before the implant but now cherish."

Spinal cord stimulation helped Tess regain her life. She has reduced her medication intake by half and is feeling optimistic about the future, "I am able to set goals like planning a holiday and starting to grow our family. These were things I was not able to do prior to the implant. I can even go to movies which I have not done in years. It may be the smallest thing to others, but it is big to me."

Tess' advice to others living in chronic pain, "no one but you knows your pain and I would not hesitate to tell anyone about this procedure. It has changed my life within eight short weeks, and I cannot imagine being without it."

Note: This patient testimonial relates an account of an individual's response to the treatment. The account is genuine, typical and documented. However, the individual's response does not provide any indication, guide, warranty or guarantee as to the response other persons may have to the treatment. The response other persons have to the treatment could be different. Responses to the treatment discussed can and do vary and are specific to the individual patient. Please consult your healthcare professional for a full list of benefits, indications, precautions, clinical results, and other important medical information that pertains to the therapy or products discussed.