



Jason Parker Crombie plays a board game with his family while holding onto the family dog, Sassy. Clockwise from left: Jason, Kailey, Amanda and Morgan.

Pain Free

Neurosurgery Gives New Lease on Life for ‘Fun Daddy’

by Mark Bliss

For Jason Parker Crombie, severe pain was his constant companion, the result of back problems which first surfaced in January 2005. Ten years earlier, at age 17, the vehicle he was driving was rear-ended by a semi-tractor trailer. Jason escaped with bumps and bruises. But precautionary x-rays indicated he could experience back problems within a decade.

When the back pain first surfaced, the Cape Girardeau resident sought relief through physical therapy. But the pain grew worse over the next several years. By March 2010, his walking gait was noticeably off. He suffered from neuropathic pain in

his right leg and thigh that became so unbearable, he couldn't walk barefoot on his home's hardwood floors.

Chronic Pain

"When you're living in chronic pain, you feel like you're alone," explains Jason, a 32-year-old senior account representative with Withers Communication, who also does some on-air features for the radio enterprise. "It hurts you physically and also gets into your heart and mind."

When he came home from work, he would have to rest on the couch with either a heating pad or ice pack. The

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back pain prevented Jason from engaging in family activities with his wife, Amanda, and young daughters, Kailey, 6, and Morgan, 4. He was lucky if he could sleep three hours a night.



Thanks to surgery, back pain patient Jason Parker Crombie is now pain free and once again enjoying his job at a Cape Girardeau radio station.

In mid-March, he arrived at Southeast’s Emergency Services in severe pain. Diagnostic tests were performed. He was admitted to the Hospital for further evaluation. Tests showed he had a herniated disc and suffered from degenerative disc disease and pars defects, a condition caused by a stress fracture to a bony region of the spine. This can lead to one vertebra slipping forward onto another.

Neurosurgeon **Kyle Colle, DO**, of the Brain and NeuroSpine Clinic of Missouri, LLC, and the Southeast Hospital Medical Staff, visited with Jason in the Hospital. “When Dr. Colle came in, he didn’t stand above me in a white coat and talk in technical, medical terms. He sat down and listened – really listened – to me and my needs. From the moment I met Dr. Colle, I felt at ease,” Jason says.

Did You Know?

- High-heeled shoes can make your legs look great. But the American Podiatric Medical Association warns that heels higher than 2 inches can warp your normal walking style and contribute to back pain.
- The most common cause of back pain is using your back muscles in activities such as lifting heavy furniture or doing yard work.
- Back pain is one of the leading reasons for missed work and is second only to upper respiratory infections for number of visits to the doctor.
- Americans spend at least \$50 billion on back pain each year.

Dr. Colle suggested that Jason would need surgery, and he was released from the hospital. During the next few months, he took pain-relieving medications prescribed by **Terry L. Cleaver, MD**, a pain management specialist with the Brain and NeuroSpine Clinic and a member of the Hospital’s Medical Staff.

Managing Pain

“We did some steroid injections. Anti-inflammatory drugs were injected into the spinal column,” recalls Dr. Cleaver. In addition to oral medications and injections, pain management practices include the use of nerve blocks and physical therapy. “It is certainly a lot more complicated than prescribing someone a narcotic,” he notes. “Every patient’s problem is unique.”

“The majority of patients we see don’t have to have surgery,” Dr. Cleaver says. But in Jason’s case, surgery was required. “He had a spine screaming to be fixed,” says Dr. Colle. On June 16, Dr. Colle performed the surgery at Southeast Hospital.

The minimally-invasive surgery involved removal of a disc and the installation of a spacer as well as bone and stem cells. Titanium screws and rods were also installed. “That is scaffolding to hold everything in place until the bone fuses,” explains Dr. Colle.

“Typically, we see some bone growth within three months, but it can take up to a year to totally fuse,” he says.

The surgery took more than five hours, but because it was minimally invasive, Jason was left with only two, 2½ inch scars.

Excellent Care

“The people at Southeast were awesome,” Jason says. “It was my first surgery. Everyone made me feel so comfortable,” he adds. “They made me feel like family. The nurses answered every question I had, and I was sent home with a phone number to call if I had any additional questions or concerns.”

He says he missed out on a lot of family activities because he didn’t seek medical help sooner. “I spent too much time taking off from life,” Jason adds. Now that he’s pain free, Jason says he can enjoy life again. Exclaims Jason’s daughter Morgan, “my fun daddy’s back!” And to Jason it’s a new beginning; “I have a new lease on life thanks to Southeast, Dr. Colle and Dr. Cleaver.”



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**For more information,
call 800-800-5123.**

Want to know more about back pain and how to treat it? Visit **SEhealth.org** and click on **Health Library**.