

Surviving Brain Cancer,

FUJI WAS FUN. THAILAND WAS AMAZING. AUSTRALIA WAS HIS FAVORITE. CURTIS MITCHELL HAS TRAVELED ALL OVER THE WORLD, BUT WHEN HE NEEDED A SKILLED BRAIN SURGEON, HE FOUND AN EXPERT CLOSE TO HOME IN SILVER SPRING.



FREE TIME: Curtis Mitchell enjoys tooling around Silver Spring, perusing travel magazines and collecting art.

Curtis Mitchell

SETS HIS SIGHTS ON THE SOUTH PACIFIC

“I knew something wasn’t right,” says the 43-year-old, Silver Spring resident. It was October 2009 and Curtis was experiencing vision and balance problems.

“The double vision was the worst,” Curtis explains. “I went to my eye doctor and after a one-minute exam, she told me to go *immediately* to the hospital.”

Curtis headed straight to Holy Cross Hospital, where the Emergency Center staff reviewed his eye exam. The exam noted swelling and bleeding behind his right eye. A magnetic resonance image (MRI) was taken of his brain to see how far the problem went.

DIAGNOSTIC EXPERTISE

“Holy Cross Hospital’s extensive neuroradiology capabilities offer patients the most advanced imaging technology available,” says Anil Narang, DO, neuroradiologist, Holy Cross Hospital. These technologies include magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and computerized tomography (CT) scans and Bi-Plane Angiography—an advanced technology that produces real-time images of complex structures and vessels from two different angles.

Curtis’ MRI showed he had a large tumor, about the size of a baseball, behind his right eye. The tumor had probably been growing for a couple of years and was now pressing on important areas of the brain that gave him his symptoms.

After reviewing Curtis’ imaging, the neuroradiologist provided this critical information to Amin Amini, MD, medical director, Neurosurgery, Holy Cross Hospital. “His condition was serious and needed immediate attention. After reviewing his scans and based on my experience, I was certain we could remove Curtis’ tumor while preserving the many important structures around it,” Dr. Amini says.

BRAIN SURGERY

Curtis was admitted to the Neuro Critical Care Unit. “The nurses were excellent. Their positive attitudes and encouragement really made a difference for me,” Curtis says. “And, Dr. Amini was fantastic. He was very caring and put me at ease. I had great confidence in him.”

While closely monitoring Curtis’ cranial nerves and brain stem function, Dr. Amini used a microsurgical technique to delicately peel the tumor off the critical structures of Curtis’ brain.

“During the five-hour procedure, we were able to remove the entire tumor while preserving all of Curtis’ neurological functions,” Dr. Amini explains. The tumor was found to be highly invasive and as a result, Curtis needed additional treatment.

During the following year, Curtis had radiation therapy and eight months of chemotherapy. “They keep an eye on me,” he says. “I used to have an MRI every month, but now it’s every six months.”

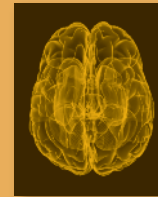
SURVIVING CANCER

Curtis is back to work full time, seeing better than ever and looking forward to a trip to the South Pacific. “Although, first up is Las Vegas,” he says with a smile.

Dr. Amini is thrilled with Curtis’ progress. He says, “This is a great outcome for such an aggressive tumor. Not long ago, patients with this kind of tumor didn’t survive more than a year. Now, with new surgical approaches and ground-breaking drugs, we see patients like Curtis going strong well beyond what we used to expect.” **HC**

Watch Holy Cross Hospital specialists talk about expert brain and spine care by visiting the Neuroscience section of our website at holycrosshealth.org.

COMPLETE BRAIN AND SPINE CARE



The neuroscience team at Holy Cross Hospital brings together experts in a range of neuroscience-related specialties and

the latest technology to provide comprehensive brain and spine care.

We offer the latest diagnostic technology, advanced pain management, a stroke response team, brain surgery experience and expertise, a Spine Center, a comprehensive Epilepsy Center, and rehabilitation services.

Our team-based approach is evident everywhere:

- Neurologists, neurosurgeons and neuroradiologists work together to plan the best possible, minimally invasive treatment options.
- Specially trained nurses, nurse practitioners and physician assistants care for neuroscience patients.
- An oncology nurse navigator serves as a “guiding hand” through the treatment process and beyond.
- Pain management specialists and rehabilitation therapists design programs to relieve patients’ pain.
- A team of experts in the Neuro Critical Care Unit provides round-the-clock patient assessment and monitoring, connecting with experts from across the country as needed through the technology of “Virtual Care.”