

PATIENT PROFILE

‘This saved my life’: Beverly woman marks World Health Day with victory over urge incontinence

By Rose Ann Haven, *WKRG News 5*



PATIENT

30-years old



ISSUE

Urge
Incontinence



RESULTS

Sleep throughout the night,
Better health and quality of life

At 22, Meghan Jones came down with a serious kidney infection that left her with a frequent need to urinate along with external pelvic pain.

Doctors told her she would have to live with the condition, known as interstitial cystitis, for the rest of her life. With that diagnosis, she unofficially joined the ranks of 50 million Americans — mostly women — who suffer from incontinence due to a variety of causes, including illness, injury, childbirth, aging and neurological issues.

“The biggest problem was not sleeping,” said Jones, who only managed to rest for two-hour stretches before having to go to the bathroom. “You get exhausted,” she said, adding that the lack of sleep caused depression and made her vulnerable to other health issues.

Jones, now 30, is all about women’s health. She plans to train as a doula and eventually provide personal support services for women and their families related to pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period. And

she wants to educate people about incontinence as an important health issue.

Women suffer from incontinence twice as often as men due to differences in physical anatomy, according to the US. Department of Health & Human Services Office on Women’s Health. The opening through which urine passes, the urethra, is shorter than for a man. A woman’s pelvic floor is different and more prone to the forces of gravity. Damage to the urethra’s sphincter muscle over time and due to childbirth can keep it from closing properly.

Jones’ condition, related to what is called “urge incontinence,” often is treated with medications.

There’s also “stress incontinence,” which occurs with sudden strenuous movement, laughing or coughing. It’s often treated with Kegel exercises that strengthen pelvic muscles or by surgically reinforcing the pelvic floor.

For either type of incontinence, health insurance providers usually cover surgical solutions, said



Dr. Pedram Ilbeigi, D.O., FACS, Board-certified in Urologist, Founder of Urological Institute and CEO, HALO MEN'S HEALTH DIVISION AND MEDICAL DIRECTOR, CLINICAL SERVICES, SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

"Adult loss of bladder control is never normal, which is why I get aggravated every time I see an adult diaper commercial," said Ilbeigi. "Millions of otherwise healthy adults suffer from incontinence, which can severely impact quality of life."

Meghan Jones, of Beverly, plays with her son Bobby during an outing last fall. After a a serious kidney infection that left her with a frequent need to urinate, her persistent quest for medical help finally paid off, helping improve her life drastically, she said.

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Fortunately, Jones was a fighter and refused to give up on herself. After two years of researching treatment options on the internet, she found Axonics.

Jones' health insurance provider, like many others, required that nonsurgical measures be attempted first.

In Jones' case, persistence paid off. She was able to undergo implantation of a sacral nerve stimulator.

"Sacral neuromodulation been around for a while," Ilbeigi said. "The idea is to send electrical impulses to the nerves that control the bladder so that it functions properly." Surgery is minimally invasive.

The biggest problem was not sleeping,

– Megan Doan

URINARY INCONTINENCE CAN AFFECT EVERYONE

It is estimated that

423M PEOPLE

people worldwide (20 years and older) experience some form of urinary incontinence¹



Urine incontinence affects

24 - 45%

of adult women.²

4 SYMPTOMS OF AN OVERACTIVE BLADDER



- Frequency
- Urgency
- Needing to go to the toilet more than once at night
- Urge incontinence



A study on 129 participants who had a similar implant showed that 89% reported a reduction in urinary urgency incontinence after one year. Their quality of life improved as well.

Prior to the actual surgery, Jones was outfitted with a trial device.

“The night of the trial, I slept 12 hours,” she said. “I tell people, this saved my life!”

With a nerve stimulator permanently installed in one of her buttocks, she resumed living life. She took up substitute teaching at St. Linus Catholic Elementary School in Oak Lawn, and even gave birth at home to her son Bobby, who turns 2 this month.

“It was great, because I wasn’t looking for a bathroom during the half-hour drive to my parents’ house, and I could sleep,” she said.

The Axonics sacral nerve stimulator is an implanted device that sends impulses to the nerves that control the bladder.

The Axonics sacral nerve stimulator is an implanted device that sends impulses to the nerves that control the bladder. (Axonics)

As a precaution, Jones switched off the device during her pregnancy. “Sadly, the symptoms came back,”

she said. Which convinced her more than ever of the stimulator’s importance.

In October 2020, Jones underwent a quick outpatient procedure to install a smaller, newer device manufactured by Axonics. It’s about the size of a zip drive, rechargeable and lasts about 15 years.

“It’s much better,” she said. “I work out a lot, and you could actually see the other one through my clothes.”

Jones considers herself lucky because she and her doctor persevered in finding the right treatment.

“Women need to be advocates for their rights and their health,” Jones said. “They need to find a doctor who will listen to them.”

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