

Student seizure-free after brain surgery

After doctors discovered a gray spot on junior Paige Vanover's brain three years ago, she underwent testing and treatment until she and her family made the decision to have surgery. She recovered with no side effects, though they were feared.



Photo provided by Paige Vanover

Hand being held by 2012 alumnus Chelsea Vanover, junior Paige Vanover recovers after surgery. At 13, in the seventh grade, Vanover was diagnosed with seizures at Riley when a gray spot on her brain was discovered. She was immediately put on medication. For the first year after being treated with medication, Vanover was seizure-free. But after that year her medication stopped working which resulted in her having multiple seizures a day. After trying many different medications, Paige continued to have up to two or three seizures a week. After waiting three years to see if medication would make the seizures stop, Paige and her family finally decided to try surgery. "I'm living without seizures and it's amazing! I still have to take seizure medication for a year and if I'm still seizure-free than I won't ever have to take them again," Paige said.

BY HANNAH SCHER
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Becoming a teenager comes with many perks such as getting a license and driving a car. The feeling of freedom and wind in his/her hair. But for junior Paige Vanover, who at one point was incapacitated by having up to eight seizures a day, becoming a teenager and experiencing teenage rituals was nothing to welcome. Even her outlook on the future scared her, as Vanover was afraid she would never be able to live a normal life.

At 13, in the seventh grade, Vanover was diagnosed with seizures at Riley when a gray spot on her brain was discovered. She was immediately put on medication right away. For the first year after being treated with medication, Vanover was seizure-free. But after that year her medication stopped working which resulted in her having multiple seizures a day.

While enduring up to eight seizures a day, Vanover suffered from memory loss and felt drained from suffering seizure after seizure.

"It was very difficult to stand by and be helpless and watch her struggle with having seizures every week knowing we could not stop them even with medication," Paige's mother Brandi Vanover said.

After trying many different medications, Paige continued to have up to two or three seizures a week. After waiting three years to see if medication would make the seizures stop, Paige and her family finally decided to try surgery.

"I was very excited for my brain surgery to know I finally had a chance of being seizure-free," Paige said.

Through EEG's and MRI's doctors discovered a gray spot on Paige's brain in which all of her seizures emanated from. The removal of the spot waded many side effects, which included droopiness in the face, seizures and death, but Paige was willing to take the risk.

"We were really scared for her to have brain surgery knowing she could come out of it with many different side effects. All in all we did what was best for her with a lot of family discussions," Brandi

said.

At the hospital Paige was surrounded by her family and her boyfriend, junior Alex Beal, during her week stay.

"I was scared. She was scared," Beal said. "...[Seeing Paige come out of surgery was] awesome. I was really relieved when she came back out and she was okay."

Coming out of surgery with no side effects, Paige now has several plates that each have two screws in her head. Most of her recovery involved lots of rest.

After resting and taking time off, Paige has now fully returned to school. The surgery has not delayed her schoolwork drastically and she is "catching up on all my classes pretty quickly."

"I got this surgery because we were hopeful that one if the many medications I've been through would help but it didn't. I'm so happy I had this surgery because the outcome is amazing and I'm seven weeks seizure-free[now over two months]!" Paige said.

With the surgery, Paige now has hope for a normal future. If she can go six

months seizure free, she will be able to get her license.

"My dad is saying the only bad thing about being seizure-free is I will get my license and leave him," Paige said.

When first diagnosed with seizures, Paige participated in Riley fundraiser's around Huntington County to spread awareness for her condition and many other children's at Riley. Johnson's Junction even featured her for their Riley fundraiser.

"I'm always having people stop me in stores or wherever I'm at asking me how I'm doing because they saw me in the paper and at gas stations and where I work," Paige said. "...It makes my day."

For now, though, Paige and her family are still focused on Paige's immediate recovery and hope she remains seizure-free.

"We will still have more doctor visits and testing in our future but as it stands of now she has an 80 percent chance of being seizure-free for life," Brandi said. "...We could not have done it without the love and support of our family and friends."