

# Beachwood Father Has New Lease on Life After Spine Surgery

Steve Little, a 30-year-old Beachwood father and IT professional, was putting together some equipment at work one morning in June 2012 when he felt something snap in his neck. Dull pain immediately crept in. The next morning, he experienced another snap — but this time the pain was severe.

“I was on the floor screaming,” Steve remembers. “It was the most intense pain I have ever known. It felt like someone stabbed me in the neck with a knife and continually dragged it down my shoulders and arms.”

## Searching for Relief

Steve’s wife rushed him to a local emergency department, but he was sent home when X-rays showed nothing wrong. In agony, Steve made an appointment with an orthopedist, who then referred him to spine surgeon Nader Hebela, M.D., of Southern Ocean Medical Center and **Meridian Neuroscience**.

“MRIs showed Steve had a large herniated disk — a cushion between spinal vertebrae that had slipped out of place. It was compressing a nerve near his spinal column, causing pain, tingling, weakness, and numbness in

his arm,” Dr. Hebela says. “Because his injury was neurological, Steve was a clear candidate for surgery.”

Dr. Hebela and Steve discussed his options, including physical therapy and other nonsurgical treatments. Steve took pain medication to get through each day while he made his decision. Soon after, Steve told Dr. Hebela he was ready to have surgery.

“I was very nervous, but I was in so much pain it didn’t matter. I could not continue a normal life without treatment,” Steve says. “I had no question that I was in good hands with Dr. Hebela.”

## A Permanent Solution

Dr. Hebela performed complex spinal surgery on Steve, removing the herniated disk and replacing it with bone grafted from Steve’s hip. The grafted bone was held in place with a plate and screws.



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“The moment I woke up from surgery, I had immediate relief. It was an instant fix. What Dr. Hebela did was incredible,” Steve says. “Within two weeks I was driving again and had no limitations.”

Steve is just one of many who have benefited from life-changing spine surgery at Southern Ocean.

“We perform complex spinal surgeries regularly at Southern Ocean, offering the same expertise you would find at much larger academic medical centers and institutions,” Dr. Hebela explains. “It’s a tremendous benefit to the community.”

Since his spine surgery, Steve Little appreciates being able to play with his 11-month-old daughter, Madison, without pain.

## Every Second Matters



When Francis Hennessy suffered a stroke while on his summer vacation, specialists at Southern Ocean Medical Center were there to stop damage to his brain and restore his heart’s rhythm. To hear more of Francis’ story, go to **MeridianNeuroscience.com**.

