



For one woman, the best option was to take half her brain 'and trash it'

EMMA'S STORY

Story by RACHEL SAUER • Photos by CHRISTOPHER TOMLINSON • The Daily Sentinel

Procedure offers hope of ending seizures

AT 7:30 A.M. MARCH 30, Emma Short was sitting up on a gurney in Denver's Swedish Medical Center, ready to be wheeled through the swinging double doors that lead to the operating room where she'd spend the next eight hours.

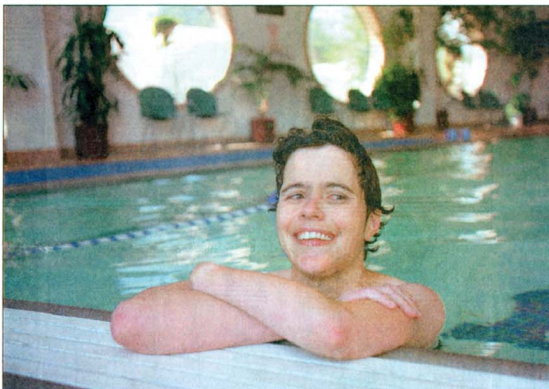
She was just back from having an MRI downstairs and was feeling happy and calm, calmer than she'd felt in weeks, from the medicine she'd already been given. Her mother, sister, niece and aunt were clustered around her trying not to feel panicked, reminding themselves that this was what Emma wanted.

The functional hemispherectomy she was about to have, in which neurosurgeon Dr. Timothy Fullagar would disconnect the right half of her brain and remove parts of it, could end the epileptic seizures she'd lived with for 17 years and give her a chance to make a normal life.

But she looked so tiny, covered by a white sheet in that windowless, beige hallway lit by muted fluorescent lights. There was a chance she might not live through the surgery or could come out of it with worse problems than before.

Her family made the half-hearted cheerful comments people make when all they can do is worry.

Emma's Denver neurologist, Dr. Ronald Kramer, was standing by her also, looking serious. The rules required him to ask once more if she was sure she wanted to go through with this. She still had the option to say no. He leaned over and looked in



TODAY, EMMA SHORT ENJOYS a number of activities, including swimming, jumping on the trampoline and taking care of her dolls. Emma had a functional hemispherectomy in March to end her epileptic seizures. Epilepsy, a neurological condition, afflicts 2.5 million Americans. For more, see page 8A.



See EMMA'S STORY, page 9A ▶

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