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Life & Style

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She lives with pain

Jean Hippey is one of more than 200,000 Americans coping with Complex Regional Pain Syndrome



Dennis R.J. Geppert/The Holland Sentinel

BY PEG MCNICHOL

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One false step changed Jean Hippey's life.

The Holland woman twisted her ankle as she left her Grand Rapids office on Aug. 20, 2003. She fell, injuring her right foot, lost her balance while getting up and "immediately reinjured it. I thought my ankle was broken," she said.

Diagnosed with torn ligaments and a "real bad sprain," Hippey, 45, said she couldn't walk after nine casts. Physical therapy was "so painful I thought I was going to die." The specialist treating her "basically said I was being a baby and told me to put a shoe on and walk it off."

Frustrated, she found a new doctor and a diagnosis: Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS).

"My body sends these messages to my brain that I'm still in a lot of pain," she said. "It remembers the



Dennis R.J. Geppert/Sentinel

Jean Hippey takes several narcotics to treat the pain of Complex Regional Pain Syndrome. She also has an implant that stimulates the spine to muffle the pain message to her brain.

injury and won't let go of it."

Hippey lost her job as marketing manager for Davenport University. Her life, once filled with church committee meetings,

activities with her five children, sewing and using her own circular saw, ground to a halt. For a year, she had to choose daily between cooking dinner or loading the dishwasher; fixing her hair or applying make up.

Now, each month, she sees Sean Grownney D.O. at Michigan Pain Consultants in Holland.

Hippey's is "one of the more severe cases (of CRPS)," he said, and it required an implant designed to dull the pain messages.

She also sees a pain psychologist for biofeedback and takes a cocktail of pain medications.

Grownney said his first task with patients is reassuring them CRPS "is not all in their heads. It is a specific disorder."

Hippey relies on husband Bob, daughter Jennifer, 22, and son Justin, 20, to ferry her to and from doctor's appointments or brief errands. Depending on daily pain

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COMPLEX REGIONAL PAIN SYNDROME

What it is: Tremendous amounts of pain with no clear reason developing, more than 80 percent of the time, months after an injury

Also known as: Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome or RSD

Who has it: 200,000 to 1.2 million Americans

Looks like: Dramatic changes in the color and temperature of the skin over the affected limb or body part

Feels like: Intense burning pain, skin sensitivity, sweating, swelling

Treatment: Can include biofeedback, desensitization therapy, narcotics, spinal injections or electronic spinal stimulator implant

If untreated: Can cause loss of function and a form of bone degeneration called osteopenia

Resources: Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome Association, www.rsd.org, toll-free: (877) 662-7737

What's the best way to get high-wattage grins?



Americans are plunking down the big bucks for whitening products

BY MADELEINE MARR

McClatchy Newspapers

Talk about putting your money where your mouth is: Last year alone, Americans spent more than \$1 billion on over-the-counter bleaching products. In his book, "Smile! The Ultimate Guide to Achieving Smile Beauty" (Warner Wellness, \$13.95), Jonathan B.

Pain

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levels, she uses a cane, walker or wheelchair.

On good days she's "a little more active and it's almost misleading for friends and family who don't understand it. They think, 'She's faking.'"

CRPS is often misdiagnosed and misunderstood, even by professionals. Hippey's family

"My prayer through this whole thing was that I not lose my joy."

JEAN HIPPIE, 45-year-old who has Complex Regional Pain Syndrome

found themselves explaining the condition to nurses and doctors after she had emergency surgery in 2005 for an unrelated disorder.

It's critical to raise awareness, she said, so "the physician can catch it in time and help you."

"My prayer through this whole thing was that I not lose

my joy," she said. "It is life-changing. (Pain) is running my life to a certain degree, but it's not beating me anymore. I can still have a quality life."

Her spring project: Sewing dresses for two little girls, including a granddaughter, in Jennifer's wedding, set for June.