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Man with multiple sclerosis hopes to get stem cell transplant

by Allison Scott

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A Wexford County man diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis is hoping to be part of a new test procedure at Northwestern University.

WPBN/WGTU — A Wexford County man diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis is hoping to be part of a new test procedure at [Northwestern University](#).

Past treatments and medications haven't worked for 49-year-old Larry Spivey, and he's been physically and mentally deteriorating more and more each year.

"I feel like MS has taken my best friend and my husband," said Wendy Spivey, wife of Larry Spivey who has Multiple Sclerosis. "I won't let it destroy my family."

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"You don't know if they're going to be able to walk or how bad the pain is for that day," said Wendy Spivey. "With our lives, we don't plan anything. We go day-by-day."

Multiple Sclerosis is a disease that affects the brain and spinal cord where the immune system attacks the myelin in the brain.

It can affect things like your movement, thinking, hearing and vision.

"Everyday life that everyone can get around doing, now I can't," said Larry Spivey who was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. "It takes all that I can do when I do have a good day to mow the lawn."

Having had no success with other medications and treatments, the Spiveys decided to look into having a stem cell transplant.

"Your immune system is destroying your brain. We just give you a new immune system and it stops destroying your brain," said Chief Richard Burt, Division of Immunotherapy for Northwestern University in Chicago. "Afterwards you don't need any immunosuppressant drugs unless it should come back."

The procedure can take several weeks, but the Spiveys say it will be worth it.

"I won't have the relapses no more and I'll be able to get around. They actually said that it'll start giving me energy and my body will start slowly building back up," said Larry Spivey. "That way I can get around better and can enjoy my family."

"We'll get our lives back kind of," said Wendy Spivey. "I'll have my best friend and my husband back."

The transplant procedure at Northwestern University is a Food and Drug Administration approved study.

Not everyone with Multiple Sclerosis is a candidate to have a stem cell transplant.