

[HOME](#) [SUCCESS STORIES](#) [ADULT STEM CELLS](#) [RECENT NEWS](#) [CONTACT US](#)

STEM CELL BLOG

Bryan Hinkle - C.I.P.D

The Comeback Kid is Coming on Strong

Story Update **

A New Beginning for Bryan Hinkle



“I can’t believe my life and the things that I am doing today.” Ask Adult Stem Cell Recipient Bryan Hinkle about his amazing recovery and that’s what he’ll tell you.

Back in 2013, Bryan received an adult stem cell transplant after years of struggling with Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy or CIDP. What has followed has been nothing short of remarkable.

Today, Bryan has a full time job helping high school seniors as they transition into college. He gets to kayak, go fishing, hunt, and play golf. He has been able to go on multiple vacations with his family. He's even spoken at a University and a doctor's association about his story and what his life is like today 7 years after his successful adult stem cell transplant.

As he shared more with us, Bryan was very transparent about what this amazing turnaround has meant to him:

"From being pretty much homebound and reliant on others for most of the things I needed through the day to now being so independent...it is humbling. I am forever grateful for the adult stem cell transplant that saved my life."

This is the original story we produced about Bryan in 2014.

Diagnosis: **Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy**
Treatment: **Adult Stem Cell Transplant**

Prognosis: **Weakness, Numbness, Pain**
Results: **Normal Lifestyle**

A Lifesaving Comeback

(September 2014) In sports, politics or business, we just naturally cheer for the underdog. But when it happens in life, where the stakes are victory—or death—the drama becomes more than just a feel-good tale on the evening news. It's real, especially when it involves a husband, a father and a friend.

If he had his way, Bryan Hinkle wouldn't be in the limelight. Content to be just another kid on the block, he was living what many consider the American Dream. "When I was a kid, I mean, I had a typical childhood," recalls Bryan. "I played all the sports. I was in the woods all the time hunting, fishing, you know. No signs, no symptoms, nothing. Just a typical child."

Fate had other plans.

It started slowly, almost imperceptibly. A tingling and numbness in the legs that was easy to ignore for a while. Then fatigue, always tired. About the time he turned into a teenager, reality set in. "I couldn't run as fast. I couldn't jump. I was falling and I was in pain—excruciating pain. My back. That's when I knew something was wrong."

That "something wrong" turned out to be a nightmare disease with a big, scary name: Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy, or CIDP for short. The autoimmune disease can attack any part of the body outside one's spinal cord. In Bryan's case, it was his legs.

Medication helped mask and control the CIDP symptoms for many years, and Bryan resumed his American Dream life. He married his sweetheart Ann and they began raising a family. Everything, it seemed, was back on track. But Fate has a way of imposing its will upon people.

Bryan suffered a severe relapse and CIDP hit him harder than ever. He lost virtually all feeling in his legs and feet and soon ended up spending his days in a wheelchair. Depression and fear followed as Bryan withdrew from life. Fate, it seemed, had triumphed over Hope.

"My biggest fear was that I was going to die," says Bryan of those darkest of days "This disease was winning and it was going to overtake me. I was just living my days, waiting for the end to come."

But perseverance—call it Hope—can be a funny thing. Home alone and surfing the Internet, Bryan stumbled across news of CIDP patients being treated by a doctor in Chicago (**Dr. Richard Burt**) who had developed a new ground-breaking adult stem cell therapy.

What started that day as a glimmer of Hope turned into a raging fire when Bryan completed testing and was approved for the procedure. Within weeks he was back at the hospital where doctors harvested his own good adult stem cells, killed off the attacking bad cells with chemotherapy, and injected the good cells back into his body.

The results were positive and almost immediate. Within two days he felt the cold tile of a bathroom floor, something he never thought he'd experience again. That sensation paled in comparison to what was coming in the weeks ahead. Feeling and mobility returned to his legs and feet and he began walking again. Before long the American dream he thought he'd lost forever was back. The comeback was complete.

Today Bryan leads a happy, healthy normal life thanks to an adult stem cell discovery that's changing the face of regenerative medicine and giving men and women real hope in their fight against dozens of diseases and conditions.

"I was definitely one of those people, in the beginning, that was very skeptical about the whole procedure," confides Ann. "But I completely believe in it, because we've been through it."

What began as a nightmare leaves Bryan wondering if it's all truly real.

"I'm a year post-transplant and I sometimes have to wake up and I ask myself, is this really my life? I've regained my independence. I'm helping take care of my children, you know. I'm being the husband and the father that I, that I dreamt about not too long ago. And for that, I'm just thankful--thankful and amazed."

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