

Choices



The Institute for
Patient Blood Management &
Bloodless Medicine and Surgery

Englewood Hospital and Medical Center

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Diego's Story: Back to Health

Page 2

A BLOODLESS SOLUTION FOR AARON'S CONGENITAL ABNORMALITY

SOLVING NORBERT'S LIFE-THREATENING PROBLEM
WITH BLOODLESS SURGERY





The Rodriguez family

Standing Tall

When a complex spinal surgery was needed to help Diego Rodriguez stand, sit, and concentrate at school, he found the help and support he needed at The Institute for Patient Blood Management and Bloodless Medicine and Surgery at Englewood Hospital and Medical Center.

“
FOR DIEGO, IT WAS ALL
ABOUT CUSTOMIZING
OUR APPROACH TO
FIND ONE THAT FIT HIS
SPECIFIC MEDICAL NEEDS
AND RESPECTING HIS
WISHES WHILE GIVING
HIM THE BEST RESULTS.
THAT’S WHAT WE DO
AT THE INSTITUTE
FOR PATIENT BLOOD
MANAGEMENT AND
BLOODLESS MEDICINE
AND SURGERY.

—Alfred Steinberger, MD

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Alfred Steinberger, MD

Looking at 16-year-old Diego, it’s hard to imagine that less than a year ago it was difficult for the Smithtown, New York, resident to live a normal, pain-free life due to a painful condition called kyphosis.

“Kyphosis is a spinal deformity that causes the back to curve severely,” says Alfred Steinberger, MD, neurosurgeon and former Chair of the Department of Neurosurgery at Englewood Hospital. “When Diego hit a growth spurt in his early teens, the area in his lower mid back became unstable and started causing him a lot of pain. It had been getting worse for several years when I began seeing him.”

SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS

Diego’s discomfort started when he was in seventh grade. At first, the pain was mild, but as time passed it began to interrupt his normal life. He developed a hunched posture and had to walk with a cane.

When his condition was discovered during a course of physical therapy, the Rodriguez family began searching for a neurosurgeon who could correct it. They had trouble finding a physician and hospital that could perform the complicated procedure while respecting the family’s religious beliefs.

As Jehovah’s Witnesses, it was important to Diego and his family that the surgery to correct his kyphosis be done without a blood transfusion. Since Diego was a minor, his family was concerned about having their rights to religious freedom ignored or taken away. When a friend told them about The Institute’s Bloodless Program, they knew they had found the right solution and traveled from their Long Island home to Englewood for the surgery.

SWEET RELIEF

On July 17, 2014, Dr. Steinberger performed a minimally invasive procedure to relieve pressure on Diego’s spine. He removed the damaged discs between Diego’s vertebrae, replaced them with biomechanical discs, and then stabilized the area with screws and rods.

“By performing the surgery in a single session and through a few small openings, we were able to keep Diego’s blood loss to a minimum,” Dr. Steinberger says.

Diego no longer walks with his cane. He grew more than an inch as his spine decompressed, and he no longer suffers from the constant, chronic pain his condition caused him.

“I can’t explain the joy that I feel now,” Diego says. “I can stand up straight, and I have more confidence. I just want to thank everybody for respecting our wishes.”

To learn more about The Institute, visit www.BloodlessMed.org. For a referral to a blood management physician, call 1-888-766-2566.