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# Health & Wellness

## Grady/Morehouse surgeons discover breakthrough treatment for traumatic brain injuries

Lacy Adamson, 17, is a walking miracle, her mom, Lori Adamson says. One minute the Newton County teen was driving down a rural, two-lane road from varsity cheerleading practice. The next second, her truck was somersaulting into a cow pasture. A motorist who was traveling behind Lacy watched in horror as Lacy's truck flipped over and over after hitting a pothole in the road. Lacy was ejected from the vehicle and so badly injured that she had to be airlifted to Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta where the Morehouse trauma team led by Dr. L. Ray Matthews worked to save her life from a devastating head injury.

"She has regained her memory. She's walking and talking and cheering again just as if she never had the accident," said Lori Adamson. "We know personally that miracles do happen."

It's been six months since Lacy Adamson was critically injured from head to foot, suffering the most serious contusions to her chest, heart, lungs, spine and brain. After the accident in July, Lacy had to learn to walk again, talk again and even swallow, her mom said.

Lori Adamson, who is a registered nurse, says that a regimen that included vitamin D3, omega 3-fatty acids, glutamine, and progesterone which Matthews started Lacy on while she was in intensive care, saved her life and put her on the road to recovery.

"We could see her improvement every day that she was in the hospital," said Adamson, who, along with her husband, stuck by Lacy's side during her treatment at Grady and rehabilitation at Egleston Children's Hospital.

"Fifty percent of patients with the type of head injury that Lacy sustained do not survive. Those injuries are known as a Diffuse Axonal Injury (DAI)," Matthews said. "Another 47 percent are in permanent comas or severely impaired the rest of their



Photo by Glenn L. Morgan/OCG News

life. Less than 3 percent regain conscience and can interact with their environments."

Matthews said he knew from the outset that he had to treat Lacy's brain injuries with multiple drug therapy in order to give her a fighting chance for survival and recovery. As soon as she arrived at the hospital, the trauma team started her on a combination of vitamin D3, omega 3-fatty acids, glutamine, and progesterone, administered through a nasogastric tube. Together, the drugs regulate inflammation and make the injured brain cells more resistant to stress, trauma, lack of oxygen, high temperatures, low temperatures, high glucose, and low glucose.

"The brain is the most complicated organ in the human body," said Matthews. "We know that single drug therapy for brain injuries does not work because a recent military study on citicoline confirmed that. We've had very successful outcomes with combination/multiple drug therapy in patients like Lacy who have returned to near normal levels of functioning after treatment. This is a breakthrough."

Matthews said giving omega 3-fatty acids to brain trauma patients is essential because 30 percent of the brain is made of omega 3-fatty acids. He said 80% of Americans are omega3-fatty acid deficient and vitamin D3 deficient.

"Being deficient in both, omega 3-fatty acids and vitamin D3, slows down the brain's ability to heal itself in patients with traumatic brain injuries," Matthews said. "Just as you would need bricks—and not straw—to repair a broken brick wall, you need omega 3-fatty acids to repair traumatic brain injuries."

Matthews said providing the body with vitamin D3 is also essential. Like omega 3-fatty acids, vitamin D3 regulates inflammation and helps the immune system fight off infection, bacteria, viruses, fungi, cancer cells, pneumonia, colds, and the flu.

Matthews also said that vitamin D3 along with glutamine (an essential amino acid during stress) produces Heat Shock Protein (HSP), which help the injured brain cells ward off stress of any kind. Instead of dying, brain cells with more

### Trauma Surgeon Dr. L. Ray Matthews

Dr. L. Ray Matthews is an assistant professor of surgery at Morehouse School of Medicine and Director of Surgical Critical Care Unit at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta. A graduate of the University of Mississippi School of Medicine, he completed his surgical residency at Morehouse School of Medicine/Grady Memorial Hospital. He did his surgical critical care fellowship at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota and was also on staff as a Senior Associate Consultant prior to his arrival at Grady Memorial Hospital in 2007.

HSP can now be repaired.

Matthews and his research team, comprised of Dr. Ed Childs, Dr. Omar Danner, Dr. Ken Wilson, Dr. Frank Jones, Diane Dennis-Griggs, NP, and Lexi Frederick, NP, have been studying vitamin D for five years. Matthews said many Americans do not produce enough vitamin D hormones because they don't get enough sunshine. He has been giving high doses of vitamin D hormone to trauma patients, those who have deficiencies and suffer from various health problems and athletes to improve their performance.

"Ninety percent of our vitamin D production comes from the sun striking our skin and making vitamin D3," Matthews said. "I call vitamin D3 God's miracle vitamin. It is the backbone or workhorse drug supplement in treating traumatic brain injuries because it works at multiple levels. Vitamin D3 controls 3,000 out of 30,000 genes in the human body. Anything that controls 10 percent of all human genes is a very powerful substance and should be respected."