

MEMBER STORY

by  Best Doctors®



NAME:
Kirk
AGE:
39

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REASON FOR CONSULTING BEST DOCTORS:

looking for confirmation of his diagnosis and alternative treatment options

When Kirk started to feel pain in his neck and shoulder muscles, he thought it was as a result of a particularly strenuous workout at the gym, so switched to swimming in an attempt to relieve his symptoms. There was no let up to the pain. In fact, if anything it just got worse when he exercised. Soon it had spread into his elbows, wrists, fingers, knees, ankles and feet.

Kirk was referred to a rheumatologist and underwent a number of thorough tests which ruled out arthritis and gout. His specialist came to the conclusion that Kirk's symptoms were typical of chronic pain syndrome and prescribed him treatment which provided little relief.

Kirk was really suffering. He was finding it difficult to get more than five hours sleep a night due to the pain which was at times so intense that he had to take time off from work. Keen to find out more about his diagnosis and whether there were any other treatments that he could try, Kirk reached out to Best Doctors for an expert second medical opinion, made available to him through his insurance provider.

Having listened to Kirk describe his symptoms, the Best Doctors medical team collected all of his medical records and helped him to pull together a list of questions to ask the expert assigned to his case.

Kirk's case was reviewed by an international expert in rheumatology who confirmed the diagnosis of chronic pain syndrome and provided information which helped Kirk understand the condition further. The Best Doctors expert then went on to recommend alternative medication that could help Kirk manage his condition and also help him sleep better.

“ I took the report to my GP and we put the recommendations in place. My quality of life has increased dramatically thanks to Best Doctors. I am happier and less anxious than I was. ”

The expert also stressed the importance of being assessed by a psychiatrist in order to deal with any underlying mood disorder such as depression. He explained that many sufferers of chronic pain

BEST DOCTORS EXPERT SPECIALTY:

Rheumatology

syndrome find that this can be at the root of their condition due to the fact that the same brain centres that control pain perception are also the ones which are linked to mood disorders. Whilst Kirk was keen to get back to playing sports, the expert advised that his focus should be on wellness rather than illness and that he should look to include stress-reduction programmes, hypnotherapy or relaxation techniques into his daily routine.

The Best Doctors expert recommended that Kirk try Cognitive Behavioural Therapy which aims to change the way a person thinks about pain and helps them to deal with illness more positively. He could then work with a physical therapist on a customized exercise regime which would allow him to get back to sports in a realistic way. Most importantly, the Best Doctors expert advised Kirk to establish a strong relationship with his treating team and ensure that he was surrounded by people who truly understood his condition.

Kirk was over the moon with the report and the insights that it gave him into his condition. After discussing it in detail with the Best Doctors medical team he took it to his GP and together they implemented the recommendations directly.

“ I would never have thought of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy myself and my specialist hadn't mentioned it to me before. The Best Doctors report opened doors I didn't even know existed. ”

Kirk has now started Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and is already noticing the benefits. He feels much happier and is in control of his condition. Not only has he learnt how to control the triggers and cope with the pain, but his quality of life has improved greatly.

Best Doctors helped Kirk:

- Identify treatments to manage his symptoms.
- Avoid further time off work
- Avoid the strain of ongoing treatment that was not resolving his symptoms