

Now in chiropractic arsenal, a ‘truly remarkable instrument’

BY DR. CHRISTOPHER CIANCI

Special to Healthwise

It was a few days before this year’s July 4th weekend.

Jane Ricci, who oversees fund-raising activities and patient care programs for the American Cancer Society in the Mid-Shore area, had staffed an ACS “Relay for Life” event in Caroline County.

The event had started at the county 4-H park in Denton where each participant had been given a “Relay For Life” T-shirt. A box with a large number of T-shirts still in it remained.

It was late. Ricci was tired and anxious to get back to Easton and to bed. As she put the wraps on the day, someone put the box in the trunk of her car. “I had no idea how heavy it was,” she recalls.

Once home, she leaned over and lifted the box of T-shirts from the trunk.

Ricci, 35, although healthy and fit, is not a large woman.

She struggled with the box. “It was very heavy and awkward,” she said, but she managed. She does not recall at that moment any specific or bothersome twinge or discomfort.

A few days later, however, in the middle of the night, she found herself, she said, on the floor, driven there by stabbing pain in the area of her upper right back and shoulder.

“It was the worst pain I had ever felt...and that I ever want to feel again,” she said.

Somehow, she managed to get up and drive herself to the emergency room at Easton’s Memorial Hospital. The only offered remedy there - muscle relaxers. She didn’t take any.

The next day –the Thursday before July 4th – she consulted a chiropractor under whose care she had previously been. Confirming the seriousness of her injury, he referred her immediately to a fellow practitioner, Dr., Christopher Cianci.

You need treatment with a cold laser and Cianci has it, he told her.

“Dr. Cianci saw me on Friday and every day for a week,” Ricci said. “Even on Saturday and the Fourth of July.”

In between visits and brief sessions under the cold laser, she followed Dr. Cianci’s prescribed regimen and “within a few days, the healing was well under way. It was unreal, unbelievable,” she said.

Dr. Cianci said that Jane has a slight curvature of the spine known as scoliosis. “In and of itself,” he said, “scoliosis does not cause problems but it can leave the spine with areas of weakness that can be subject to injury under stress.”

The key to treatment, he said, is a combination of spinal adjustments and applications of the cold laser.

The cold laser is not “cold.” It is called “cold” to differentiate it from the “hot” laser which is used in surgical procedures. Actually, the patient feels nothing. The fact that treatment is under way is apparent only by a stream of light on the treatment area. The entire procedure is both quick and comfortable.

Dr. Cianci noted that the cold laser treatments available in his office are the same as those used on world famous cyclist Lance Armstrong in his fitness regimen for his multiple Tour de France victories.

Cold laser, Dr. Cianci explained, “decreases inflammation, decreases pain and speeds the healing process.” It works equally well for acute conditions, like Jane’s, and chronic problems involving arthritic joints, muscle problems or spinal disc conditions.

“Many people,” he continued, “are familiar with various forms of physical therapies such as ultrasound, electrical stimulation and the like. These work primarily at the muscular level.

“The reason why cold laser therapy works much better is that it goes deeper and works in the cellular level, speeding up the healing process.”

Dr. Cianci calls the cold laser “truly a remarkable instrument” and readily admits that “I have been thoroughly and happily surprised by how well it works. It is one of the most exciting instruments I have seen clinically in 20 years of practice.”

Jane Ricci is one of the instrument’s many beneficiaries. Now returned to working out at the Easton YMCA and to riding her horse –“for fun,” she noted – she was not previously a stranger to chiropractic care but, as do many people, had always conceived it to be principally for those injured in accidents or in sports, or just for the elderly.

Her outlook on chiropractic is now radically altered.

“I realize now,” she said, “that it’s an integral part of a lifestyle devoted to wellness. I know people are nervous about the hand manipulation which is associated with chiropractic care, but doctors now have so many other options.”

For example, she said, Dr. Cianci has a hand-held instrument that makes adjustments without the “popping” or “cracking” noise that makes some patients hesitant in seeking chiropractic care.

Ricci is determined to avoid the excruciating pain she once felt.

“Of course, I am careful about picking up heavy things and jarring movements. But you can be sure of this,” she added. “I will always be a chiropractic patient.”