



OSF Saint Anthony's Health Center Takes a Team Approach to Concussion Rehab

For immediate release

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(February 1, 2018 | Alton, IL) – 20 year old Cody Blacklock has never let an injury slow him down. The avid wakeboarder has had his share of spills and mishaps, but a major fall recently resulted in his eighth concussion, and he was having trouble recovering.

“My symptoms didn't start right away,” said Blacklock. “It was a few days later and my memory was really bad. My friends said I just kept saying the same thing over again, but I couldn't remember saying it. I had headaches that would come on fast and were really intense making me feel sick to my stomach. My neck and lower back hurt really badly. I had no idea it was connected to the concussion though.”

“It's always frightening to consider your son has a brain injury or trauma,” said Betsy Blacklock, Cody's mother. “It's tough getting a 20 year old to slow down mentally and physically for brain healing to take place, but he was also having problems in class. He had studied for a test and then when he sat down to take it, he couldn't recall anything at all.”

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury from a blow or jolt to the head or body that causes the brain to shake inside the skull and changes how your brain normally functions. Symptoms can present themselves immediately following a concussion or, as in Blacklock's case, days, months or years after the injury.

According to Carol Babcock, an Occupational Therapist at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony's Health Center, concussions shouldn't be treated like a routine bump on the head. These injuries are both dangerous and complex, requiring highly skilled assessment and treatment.

“It is important to take concussion seriously, as a concussion is a traumatic brain injury,” cautioned Babcock. “It changes how the brain normally functions. If a concussion is not recognized and treated properly there is a risk of Second Concussion syndrome that could result in death or severe health problems.”

Babcock is Impact Certified and Level 1 and 2 Concussion Certified. She has closely witnessed the horrible effects of concussion. Her son suffered a severe concussion playing college soccer. Because of the injury, he went from a healthy athlete to not being able to lift his leg. It prompted Babcock to help develop a special Concussion Rehab Clinic at OSF Saint Anthony's Health Center.

“At that time I prayed God would bring something good out of him suffering from a concussion. I am very passionate about this, as I know what my son went through,” said Babcock. “I also want to be able to help parents, teachers, coaches, and the community better understand concussion management and the recovery process from the injury.”

The Concussion Rehab Clinic at OSF Saint Anthony's includes an integrated team that responds quickly when a concussion is suspected. This group of specialists includes neurology, occupational therapy, pediatrics, physical therapy, primary care, psychological services and speech therapy, all with the goal of helping someone suffering with a concussion to return to daily activities.

“We wanted to come at this with a multi-disciplinary approach. Each patient has different needs and different goals. Whether that is returning to the field, the classroom, the job site, or just his or her daily routine we work to make it happen. Focusing on every aspect of a brain injury will help a patient reach those goals and have the tools needed to reach the best possible outcome for their case,” said Babcock.

For Blacklock, his sessions with Babcock and the staff at OSF Saint Anthony’s have gotten him back on track. The college student is back in the classroom and has returned to his active lifestyle.

“I feel great, I feel like I made a full recovery. I think it would have taken a lot longer to heal without the concussion rehab, or maybe I wouldn’t have healed as well as I did without it,” he said.

According to the experts at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony’s Health Center, seek immediate professional medical help if a concussion is suspected. Do not return to play, work or any physical activity until you have been evaluated by a health care professional.

For more information about OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony’s Concussion Clinic, call (618) 463-5171.