

# Health Bulletin



## Study: Innovative System Calms Tremors In 83 Percent Of Patients

(NAPSA)—Imagine hands that shake so severely you're unable to button a shirt by yourself, brush your teeth, use a computer keyboard, even sign your own name. More than one million Americans suffer from Essential Tremor, the most common neurological disorder. It is a disabling condition with a predominant symptom that's nearly impossible to miss: hands that shake uncontrollably.

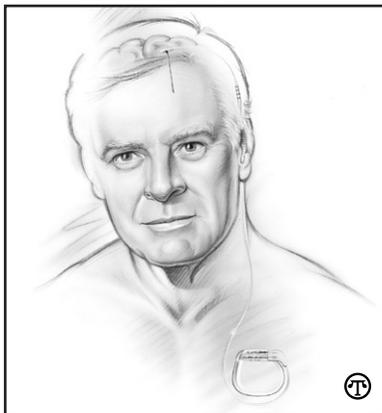
Fortunately, there are new technologies that can help. For example, Activa® Tremor Control Therapy from Medtronic is providing tremor relief for thousands of patients worldwide. A recent study published in *Neurology* found that patients who received the Activa System experienced an 83 percent reduction of their tremor.\*

The Activa System uses a surgically implanted medical device, similar to a pacemaker, to deliver mild electrical stimulation to the thalamus, a structure deep in the brain that influences motor control. The stimulation blocks the brain signals that cause tremor. More than 14,000 patients worldwide have had tremors quieted with the Activa System.

### Enduring 20 years of tremor

The painfully obvious symptoms of Essential Tremor take their toll on those with the condition. They tend to lose self-confidence, become reclusive and make extreme adjustments to their work and personal lives to avoid calling attention to themselves.

That's what happened to Clayton Wangness.



**The Activa system uses a surgically implanted medical device that delivers mild electrical stimulation to the thalamus, blocking brain signals that cause tremor.**

A high school agriculture teacher, Clayton suffered from a tremor in his left hand that drew attention from students and co-workers. To avoid their questions and stares, he would arrive at work early in the morning to write on the chalkboard and he adapted lesson plans by removing hands-on demonstrations. He even ate his lunch in the privacy of his classroom rather than with the other teachers and students in the cafeteria.

The tremor affected more than just Clayton's profession. It compromised his personal and spiritual life as well.

"I was very unsure of myself. If we were eating out as a family, we'd almost always sit in a booth because I felt safe behind dividers," explains Clayton.

Because Clayton was unable to hold a plate or glass steadily, his wife, Harriet, would carry his plate through a buffet line. Clayton simply didn't drink beverages in public.

Perhaps the worst realization came when Clayton felt he no longer could participate in communion at his church. ("I told the pastor I'd probably spill the wine.") While the church accommodated his special need, it still was a source of sadness.

### A life-changing treatment

Medication provided mild success for control of the tremor, but also side effects that robbed Clayton of his appetite and gave him an upset stomach.

In March 1999 he learned of Activa Tremor Control Therapy. A few months later, he underwent a surgical procedure to implant the Activa System.

Clayton's tremor has been calmed. Today, he writes on the chalkboard with confidence—in front of his students. In the cafeteria, he carries his plate and drinks from a glass in the company of his co-workers. On Sundays, he steadily holds the wine chalice to his lips.

"Before, there were many things I didn't dare do. The Activa System is life-changing—mentally, spiritually and emotionally. I'm more confident in the work I do and more appreciative of my good health."

For more information on the Activa System, talk with a neurologist or call Medtronic at (800) 664-5111, ext. 1055.

\* *Neurology*, 1998; 51: 1063-1069.