Josh’s tumor was successfully removed through an open craniotomy, an invasive surgical procedure that requires opening of the skull. His recovery was slow but complete, and within two months, Josh was back on the BMX circuit. Two years later during his yearly check-up, an MRI showed two new tumors at the original cancer site. Josh felt his world grind to a halt for the second time. The optimism he’d built following his first diagnosis, surgery and recovery was squashed. Josh knew that there had to be an alternative to invasive brain surgery and after the harsh reality of a second diagnosis set in, he committed to finding another way.

In 2010, shortly after achieving a lifelong goal of becoming a professional BMX athlete, Josh Perry received his first brain tumor diagnosis and wasn’t sure what his future would hold. Josh had a meningioma, a benign tumor that caused intense headaches and significantly impaired vision. Today, thanks to medical technology, Josh Perry is a happy, healthy 27-year-old with his entire life ahead of him.

“**If I had been diagnosed with this condition 20 years ago I probably would not be alive today. Instead, I am living a physically, mentally and spiritually fulfilling life because of the innovative advances in medical technology.**”
THE TREATMENT: RADIOTHERAPY

Following extensive internet research and discussions with his surgeon, Josh learned about and decided on a form of radiotherapy or radiation therapy called stereotactic radiosurgery. With this non-invasive approach, beams of radiation are precisely delivered to specific areas within the brain without surgically entering the skull.

There are many different forms of radiotherapy, most of which use different types of high-energy radiation, such as X-rays, electron beams, protons or gamma rays, to damage or kill cancerous and non-cancerous cells so they can’t reproduce. Patients generally receive a specific number of treatments over an established period of time.

One week after his treatment Josh was once again at the helm of his BMX bike. He reported the procedure to be painless and similar to getting an MRI, only shorter. In addition to continuing to compete on the BMX circuit, Josh is channeling his experiences and his newly earned certification as a holistic health coach towards broad-scale health awareness programs and campaigns. As one of a handful of people to have survived three separate brain tumors, Josh believes it is his mission to help educate people with brain tumors about their treatment options.

DISEASE & TREATMENT

According to the National Cancer Institute, meningioma is a type of slow-growing tumor that forms in the meninges, which are thin layers of tissue that cover and protect the brain and spinal cord. Meningiomas usually occur in adults.²

According to Cancer.Net, Meningioma is the most common primary brain tumor, making up about 35% of all primary brain tumors. It can cause serious symptoms if it grows and presses on the brain or spinal cord or grows into the brain tissue.³

Approximately 80% of meningiomas are benign. The remaining 20% are either called atypical with an increased risk of the tumor returning after treatment (recurrence) or, rarely, malignant.⁴

Radiotherapy is one of the most common forms of treatment for cancerous and non-cancerous tumors in the body. In most cases, radiation therapy is a local treatment, which is aimed at and affects only the part of the body being treated.⁵

Radiotherapy uses different types of high-energy radiation, such as X-rays, electron beams, protons or gamma rays, to damage or kill cancer cells so they can’t reproduce. Different amounts of radiation are used to destroy different types of cancer cells. Patients receive a specific number of treatments over an established period of time.⁶

Stereotactic radiosurgery is a type of radiotherapy that delivers a large, precise radiation dose to a small tumor area. Because of the precision involved in this type of treatment, the patient must remain very still. Head frames or individual body molds are used to limit movement. This type of treatment delivers higher doses of radiation over a shorter period of time, allowing patients to often complete treatment in a week or less.⁷

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4. Ibid
7. Ibid