

# Breakthrough Hormone Treatment Fights Parkinson's

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By Nick Tate

Parkinson's disease strikes nearly 60,000 Americans every year, making even the most minor daily tasks a major challenge for many people. For 54-year-old Mike Puzzi, the first troubling symptoms of Parkinson's surfaced in 2010, taking a toll on both his physical health and his psychological outlook.

But since June, the Arizona native has been on a pioneering new treatment, called SottoPelle Hormone Pellet Therapy. Developed by Scottsdale physician Gino Tutera, M.D., the therapy uses bio-identical hormones, delivered through implants placed under the skin, to ease the symptoms of Parkinson's and slow its progression.

Since starting treatment, Puzzi tells Newsmax Health, his health and psychological outlook have improved dramatically and his symptoms are largely under control.

"It was just an unbelievable change in my life," says Puzzi, of the impact of the therapy. "I've cut my medicine down from eight pills a day to four pills a day. It made a world of difference in my quality of life and everything in my world today. I wouldn't know what to do without the pellets."

Dr. Tutera explains that the painless treatment method involves inserting a rice-sized pellet under the patient's hip which delivers a precise dose of hormones. Unlike other therapies that take a "one size fits all" method, SottoPelle is customized for each patient, based on their individual hormonal deficiencies. Once in place, the pellets work with the patient's own bodily functions and other medications to release just the right levels of hormones necessary to maintain levels of key brain chemicals, such as dopamine, which are depleted in Parkinson's patients.

"Hormone therapy has been used in the past, and there's documentation in the [medical] literature that it has been beneficial, but the results have been so spotty because of the fact that they were always using other forms of delivering the hormones, usually pills, for the most part," Dr. Tutera explains.

But with SottoPelle therapy, the patient's heart rate and blood flow govern the release of hormones from the pellets implanted under the skin.

"It allows the body to control the release of the hormone, and therefore as long as your heart's beating and you have pellets in place, you're getting a continual flow of hormone [which] then gives the brain the capability of increasing dopamine production and other ... neurotransmitters, — serotonin, endorphins —all of which are beneficial to the Parkinson's patient," he tells Newsmax.

In addition, testosterone therapy helps build muscle, allowing for greater capacity for exercise, better physical endurance, and faster recovery from exercise or physical therapy.

In patients like Puzzi, Dr. Tutera has seen vast improvements, allowing many to cut back on their medicine.

"This is not a cure, he notes, but it's a really a great adjunctive therapy to use to [potentially] to forestall the progression of the disease. As I told Mike, if we don't get any better than where you are now, the quality of life that you have is so far superior to what you had before you got pellets.

"I'm markedly excited about maybe having these patients get to the point where they only need minimal medication or hopefully no medications whatsoever."

Although the Food and Drug Administration has traditionally taken a dim view of bio-identical hormones, Dr. Tutera says he has seen tremendous progress in his patients who have received the treatment.

Puzzi, who has four daughters and nine grandchildren with his wife of 25 years, says he first noticed symptoms of Parkinson's in 2010, but wasn't formally diagnosed until this year. His wife had been going to Dr. Tutera's clinic for years, so when he read about the SottoPelle therapy in a fitness magazine, he decided to give it a try.

"I received my first pellets in June and my second set in October," he says. "The pellets have helped me in many ways."

Today, he says he has more energy, goes to the gym regularly without a problem, and has noticed improvements in his memory, concentration, sleep, and mobility. In addition, he's reduced his medication — from eight pills a day to three or four — and confides that there have been some unexpected developments in other areas of his life.

"My libido has gone through the roof which has improved my relationship with my wife," he says. "My wife also says I am basically a happier, easy going, and my patience is much, much better.

"The joke at work is everyone is going to pitch in to pay for my pellets because I'm more patient. All in all I feel better; I'm happier and feel like I can conquer this life."

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