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## Shona Holmes

**Shona Holmes** was in trouble: The list of her symptoms included headaches, sleeplessness, dizziness, low libido and, worst of all, rapidly deteriorating vision. Her family doctor in Canada ordered an MRI, and a brain tumor was detected. But it would take months for her to get on the appointment calendar of a neurologist or endocrinologist in Canada.

"I knew in my gut that I had to see someone and could not wait five to six months," she says. So she called Mayo Clinic and got an appointment the same day.

For **Holmes**, a 31-year-old native of Waterdown, Ontario, traveling far from her husband, other family members and friends was difficult. She knew there would be several appointments and a battery of diagnostic tests. But she knew it had to be done. So, flying solo, she headed for [Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale, Arizona](#).

Once there, her fears were instantly calmed. "I received the most humane treatment of my entire life," she says. "Everything was wonderful — the ambiance — from my treatments to my first encounter at the check-in registration desk, every physician and nurse, was absolutely out of this world."

[Dr. Naresh Patel](#), neurosurgeon, diagnosed **Holmes** as having a Rathke's cleft cyst (RCC). The rare, fluid-filled sac grows near the pituitary gland at the base of the brain and eventually can cause hormone and vision problems. Dr. Patel joined forces with [Drs. David W. Dodick](#), neurologist, and [Michael D. Whitaker](#), endocrinologist, to work on **Holmes'** case.

Their further tests revealed an increase in the size of her cyst over a short period of time as well as progressively worsening vision. "I was concerned that the pressure on **Shona's** nerves were causing her to become blind," says Dr. Patel. "We needed to remove the cyst to save her vision."

### No time to waste

Within 10 days, **Holmes** returned to Canada with a confirmed diagnosis — and a growing sense of dread. She needed brain surgery immediately, and the thought of leaving home again was daunting: "Traveling so far from home and being far away from my family was a big deal for me, and then having them go into my brain — this was huge!"

**Holmes** returned to Mayo Clinic for several weeks of tests, and then got ready for the surgery. This time, her husband, David, was by her side.

By accessing **Holmes'** brain through her nose and sinuses, surgeons were able to remove the cyst without a single incision on her face. **Holmes** was discharged from the hospital four days later, cured of her disease.

### 'There really are no borders'

"I've never been sorry for a second," says **Holmes**. "And how fortunate I was to have Dr. Patel as my surgeon."

When she first saw Dr. Patel, **Holmes** had lost half the vision in her right eye and 25 percent in her left eye. After the surgery, her vision was 100 percent restored.



Shona Holmes



"Dr. Patel is my hero," she says. "We laughed, giggled and cried together." **Holmes** said she also was comforted by the fact that some of her doctors were Canadian. "It made me realize there really are no borders," she says.

She's safely back in Canada now, reunited with family, friends and her golden retriever, Magnum. "It was a big deal leaving home for treatment, and not having that support with me in Arizona," she says. "But my husband was determined to get me help — and I found it at Mayo."

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