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**Kernan Hospital**

**A VitalStim® Therapy Success Story**

Jockey Ricky Wilson knows all about "odds." His winning record has been considered a major component in determining racing odds for decades.

On May 8, 2004, horrified racing fans at Pimlico Race Track witnessed Wilson's odds for survival crash, when his horse fell while coming out of the gate, throwing Wilson forward. As they both tried to get up, the horse bolted, clipped Wilson in the head, and caused critical head and neck injuries.

After life-saving surgery at the University of Maryland Medical Center's Shock Trauma Center, he underwent two months of intense inpatient rehabilitation at Kernan Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation. Wilson then began a daily outpatient rehabilitation program close to his home. Life was returning to normal for the jockey, except for one major activity and pleasure...eating by mouth. The massive injuries had left Wilson with a pharyngeal swallowing disorder. Because of this, he received all of his nutrition through a feeding tube, inserted directly into his stomach.

Wilson's outpatient speech/language pathologist had heard of a relatively new technique for remediation of swallowing disorders. It involved using electrical stimulation to activate the swallowing muscles. VitalStim® had recently been approved by the FDA. Together, Wilson and his speech/language pathologist found the only outpatient location in Maryland at the time to offer this therapy with certified clinicians was Kernan Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation. And the rest is history....

Wilson began an intensive VitalStim® program at Kernan's Outpatient NeuroRehabilitation Program in July, 2004. After only twelve sessions, a modified barium swallowing test revealed that Wilson was able to swallow all foods and liquids safely. His feeding tube was soon removed and Ricky and his wife Jean celebrated by going to a restaurant for dinner.

One year after the racing accident, the Wilsons returned to Kernan to thank their speech/language pathologist, Linda Miller. The Wilson's agree, "You don't realize how important swallowing is until you can't swallow." Thanks to VitalStim® and Ricky Wilson's determination, he now can eat normally and enjoy the pleasures of food.

