



St. Luke's shows off balance system

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BETHLEHEM, Pa. -

Balance is something most people take for granted and nobody knows that more than Chris Henry of Palmer Township.

For the last few years she has had serious problems with her balance and couldn't get much help from doctors.

"It's not frustrating, it's devastating," she said. "I have to hold the wall all the time because when you walk you feel like walking on a cloud," she recalled about what it used to be like for her.

"I was falling on the floor unconscious from

taking showers," she said.

Henry was at her wits' end and said she even got depressed because nobody was able to pinpoint what was wrong and offer a solution.

But things are much better for Henry now after only a month of physical therapy and using equipment called the Biodex Balance System with Sharon Ernst, a physical therapist with St. Luke's University Health Network.

"I think she's my angel. I am so grateful to her," said Henry. She said her dizziness is gone now.

Patients stand on the piece of equipment and they and their physical therapist look at a screen.

"It has a force plate that can actually register a person's ability to balance. We can actually get a computerized read out now," explained Ernst.

"It makes it easier to understand where this person is losing their balance, are they having difficulty moving forward, is it backwards, is it with vision versus without vision."

Twelve St. Luke's physical therapy locations offer the Biodex Balance System, which tracks patients' progress and offers immediate feedback. Henry is also able to do different activities and exercises on the equipment.

"I could see how good I'm getting," said Henry, who also does exercises at home that Ernst recommends.

The equipment can also be used with neurological and orthopedic patients and can also be used in rehabilitation after someone has had a concussion.

Ernst said, "Time after time patients are telling us, 'you have no idea, I've been living with this for how long,' we hear this all the time and they can't believe there's something out there to help them."

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