

## Carolines story

[alarm beeps]

**Narrator:** Imagine, you wake up in the morning and you can't see through your right eye.

[background music]

**Caroline:** I was really scared and I didn't really know what was happening.

**Julie:** Caroline woke up around 6:15, and her right eye was swollen, at that time, the size of a butt of a ping pong ball.

**Caroline:** When my mom first saw me, she said, "What happened?" and she was really scared and confused.

**Narrator:** The Denean family rushed Caroline to a nearby hospital.

**Julie:** They were pretty overwhelmed with what they saw. The attending doctor said, "You need to go into Boston."

**Narrator:** Caroline was immediately taken to the Mass. Eye and Ear Emergency Department where she was seen by ophthalmologist, Dr. Daniel Lefebvre.

**Julie:** He told us that Caroline's swollen eye was actually called ocular cellulitis. It was basically the swelling from fluid that instead of draining down into her sinuses actually went into the eye cavity.

**Narrator:** Doctors went to work immediately, pediatric otolaryngology, Christopher Hartnick drained the infection in the sinuses while Dr. Lefebvre did the same for Caroline's eye, disaster was avoided but a few days later, Caroline fell ill. The infection had spread to her brain.

**Dr. Daniel R. Lefebvre:** That's dangerous. When the infection is around the brain, there is real risk of a seizure, other neurological problems, and does become life threatening.

**Julie:** It needed immediate attention, emergency surgery.

**Dr. Lefebvre:** Ordinarily to drain an infection like that from around the brain, an incision would be made across the scalp and that's elevated, and a piece of bone is removed from the skull and that allows drainage of the infection. The problem is that's a big incision. It just takes time to do it, even time to repair it, a long time to heal.

**Narrator:** However Dr. Lefebvre felt it was possible to perform another kind of procedure that was less intrusive, but he wouldn't know for sure until he and the neurosurgeon were in the OR.

**Michael:** It was very scary and nerve racking for me as a father to basically have to turn the keys over to a team of individuals and really have no power myself to help the process.

**Dr. Lefebvre:** We made an incision just above the hair of her eyebrow and that allowed us to get down to the bone, a small drill hole was made in the bone here. The neurosurgery team came in and they were able to drain the infection and clean out the area through that small hole. The closure was accomplished simply by closing the soft tissue and the skin here with some stitches.

**Julie:** Two hours later, Caroline was sitting up in her bed in the hospital and she asked to have her hair washed.

**Dr. Lefebvre:** End result for Caroline is, if she wanted to, she could forget this ever happened.

**Julie:** I love Dr. Lefebvre. He truly could relate to us. You could see that he cared about my family just as much as he could care for his own family.

**Narrator:** Dr. Lefebvre is quick to share credit with his colleagues, like Dr. Hartnick.

**Dr. Lefebvre:** You need to have an eye doctor, an EMT doctor, a neurosurgeon, pediatric infectious disease specialist, all coming together to get that result. It's limited to centers such as Mass. Eye and Ear.

**Narrator:** Today, it's virtually impossible to see where Caroline had her surgery. Last year, she showed how grateful she was for all the hospital did.

**Caroline:** For my birthday, I asked my family and friends that if they were going to give anything to me for my birthday, to please make a donation to Mass. Eye and Ear, and they did.

**Michael:** We were touched and we were very proud as parents to have a 12-year old to make a decision like that.

**Julie:** I have a lot of gratitude for everything that they did for us during our time at Mass. Eye and Ear, and I do truly feel blessed that we live so close to such an amazing hospital.