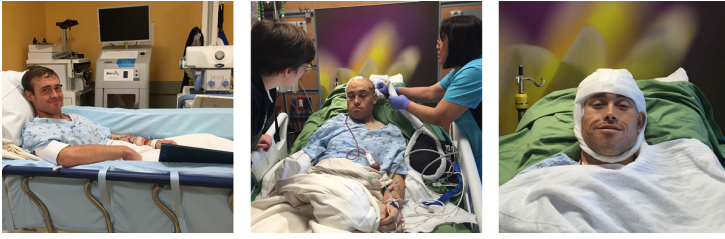


A long day for Kevin (and the family)



It started out like any other day. Up at 5:30am, quick shower, drive Kevin to Kaiser for brain surgery. That's pretty typical, right? Thought so.

Seriously, there's not much worth getting up that early for, other than having to catch an early flight to someplace REALLY special (and even then I'd spend a fair number of \$\$\$ more to catch a later flight) or maybe having to drive a couple hours to a bike century. Maybe. In general, I'd try to find a hotel closer so I could get an extra hour of sleep. But it's not every day you get to have your skull sawed open, get 80 electrodes placed directly on top of your brain, seal it back up and then settle in for a painful week at the hospital.

Why would anyone do that? In Kevin's case, it's an opportunity to try and reduce the severity, maybe eliminate entirely, his epilepsy seizures. The process is so simple! Do what I described above, slowly withdraw the meds that try to control his seizures, then massively document the brain activity associated with the seizures that ensue. After a week of this, the data is analyzed and a decision made to either replace, er, I mean, remove the tiny part of the brain that's sending out the seizure signals (which is hopefully identified by all those electrodes) or implant an electronic gadget that analyzes, in real time, brain wave data. When it detects a seizure about to start, it creates an anti-seizure to stop it in its tracks.

The procedures aren't terribly risky, but it's still quite an investment in time (a month off the bike and away from work) and money (even with insurance, the co-pays are going to add up). But considering what's involved, any co-pay is pretty insignificant and one really has to consider how fortunate Kevin is to be born into a family that can afford insurance and the other costs involved.