



**Rick Stevens**  
**North Wilkesboro, NC**  
**Born 1974**  
**Diagnosed 1992**

*"I can't tell you how much it means to have a doctor who not only knows about your condition, but who genuinely cares about helping you get better."*

Rick Stevens was an eighteen-year-old college freshman and felt like the world was "his for the taking"—until he woke up in the emergency room, surrounded by family and friends, with no idea why he was in the hospital or what had happened. Rick was diagnosed with epilepsy, and was told that he experienced tonic-clonic and complex partial seizures. For more information about epilepsy and seizure types, please see [About Epilepsy](#).

The next several years were difficult—both for Rick and his family, not least of all because he had to move back home from college. Rick tried many different medications, and while some worked better than others, none eliminated the seizures or even significantly reduced their severity. For his family, who had no experience with epilepsy, the seizures were frightening.

Frustrated and determined to prove he could make it on his own, Rick moved 500 miles away from his hometown and his support system—his family. Ultimately, he found himself isolated and began struggling with depression. Proving that good things can come during difficult times, Rick also found a new neurologist who seemed as committed as he was to getting the seizures under control. Rick's neurologist suggested he enroll in a clinical trial for a new epilepsy medication, which finally controlled the seizures. Rick was also able to graduate from college with a degree in interior design and architectural drafting.

While Rick accomplished his goal of living independently far from his family, he recognized that the move abruptly cut off the support network his family provided. Realizing what an important role they play in his life, Rick decided he wanted to be near his family again. He moved back to his hometown, purchased and began restoring a house, and started working for his family's electrical engineering business. He even adopted a dog who accompanies him on hikes. Rick now knows how important it is to have people to lean on, and is committed to being that person for others impacted by epilepsy.

As a result, Rick became an Epilepsy Advocate, and is determined to help others learn from his experience and realize there is hope after an epilepsy diagnosis. He says, "Asking for help may not always be easy, but it's smart. So I urge you to develop your own support system of family, friends and neighbors to help you when you are in need."