

Boston Musician Travels Cross-Country for a Complex Brain Tumor Surgery — And Returns to the Stage Nine Weeks Later

Renowned neurosurgeon Dr. Aaron Cohen-Gadol removes a complex petroclival meningioma, highlighting why choosing the right specialist—even if it requires travel

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, April 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When Connor Cox, a professional musician from Boston, began suffering from relentless headaches, pulsing sensations, and nausea that forced him to consider abandoning his career, he had no idea a rare [brain tumor](#) was to blame. After more than a year of worsening symptoms and inconclusive consultations, an MRI revealed a [petroclival meningioma](#) — one of the most surgically demanding tumors in all of brain surgery; the tumor was pressing upon the most critical centers of the brainstem, controlling heartbeat and consciousness. The discovery set Cox on a journey that ultimately brought him across the country to Los Angeles and the operating table of [Dr. Aaron Cohen-Gadol](#), a world-renowned neurosurgeon, with unique expertise in operating on some of the most difficult brain tumors with unparalleled results.



Dr. Aaron-Gadol

Nine weeks after a complex, two-stage surgical procedure, Cox played his first live show. His head pain was virtually gone.

Petroclival Meningiomas: Among the Most Formidable Challenges in Brain Surgery

Petroclival meningiomas are slow-growing tumors that arise at the junction of the petrous bone and the clivus, deep at the base of the skull. Their anatomical location — adjacent to the brainstem, critical cranial nerves, and major vascular structures — makes them notoriously

difficult to treat and places them in a distinct category of surgical complexity. Many surgeons consider tumors in this location very risky and expect unfortunate results with their surgeries for this tumor.

Cox's tumor measured approximately four centimeters and was positioned directly on his brain stem, making watchful waiting or standard approaches unfeasible. The surgical team faced the dual challenge of achieving maximum safe resection while preserving the delicate neurological structures surrounding the mass. Only a small number of neurosurgeons in the world have the subspecialty experience and caseload necessary to reliably achieve favorable outcomes for these tumors.

"The initial recommendation Cox received was a large craniotomy — a major open-skull procedure," noted Dr. Cohen-Gadol. "These cases demand not just technical precision, but an intimate familiarity with the anatomy of the skull base. Experience and volume at a center of excellence make a life-saving difference in outcomes."

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Connor Cox

From Misdiagnosis to Expert Care: A Patient's Journey Across the Country

For over a year, Cox attributed his worsening neurological symptoms to the occupational hazards of live performance. He tried dietary changes, increased hydration, and modified exercise routines — none of which provided relief. After visits to both a primary care physician

and an ear, nose, and throat specialist yielded no answers, a referral for an MRI finally revealed the truth.

Urged by a friend in the medical field to seek a second opinion before proceeding with surgery at a major medical center in Boston, Cox searched online for a surgeon with specific expertise in petroclival meningiomas. Dr. Cohen-Gadol's name emerged as a leading specialist in the world.



ATLAS Institute Brain and Spine



Dr. Aaron Cohen-Gadol Operating on a Petroclival Meningioma

Within hours of his initial email inquiry, Dr. Cohen-Gadol had scheduled a video consultation — breaking down the diagnosis, the surgical approach, and the expected prognosis in clear, reassuring terms.

"In ten minutes on that Zoom call, he settled fears that had been building for a year and a half," Cox recalled. "He was efficient, articulate, to the point — and he genuinely made me feel I was in the right hands."

A Miraculous Operation and a Remarkable Recovery

Dr. Cohen-Gadol who has pioneered more than 40 minimally invasive techniques for complex brain tumors, performed the tumor removal via such techniques and Cox was discharged from the hospital approximately one week after the procedure.

His recovery progressed steadily. At nine to ten weeks post-surgery, Cox performed at his first live music show — a milestone that had seemed unthinkable just months before. He reported that his chronic head pain had nearly completely resolved.

"I thought I was going to have to give up music," Cox said. "Now I'm back on stage. This is probably one of the best decisions I've made in my life to travel and have my surgery with Dr. Cohen-Gadol."

Why Traveling to an Expert Surgeon Is Worth It

For rare, complex neurosurgical conditions, the choice of surgeon and surgical center has a profound and well-documented impact on outcomes. Volume-outcome relationships in skull base surgery consistently show that high-volume, subspecialty surgeons achieve significantly lower complication rates, more complete tumor resections, and better preservation of neurological function than low-volume counterparts.

Dr. Cohen-Gadol encourages patients with rare or surgically complex diagnoses to seek subspecialty consultation regardless of geographic distance. Modern telemedicine makes initial consultations accessible from anywhere, and the potential benefit of care delivered by a true expert in the specific condition far outweighs the inconvenience of travel.

"The distance is far," Cox acknowledged, "but it's one of the best decisions you'll make in your life. I guarantee it."

About Dr. Aaron Cohen-Gadol

Dr. Aaron Cohen-Gadol is a distinguished neurosurgeon specializing in complex skull base tumors and minimally invasive brain surgeries. He is internationally recognized for his surgical outcomes, patient-centered approach, and contributions to neurosurgical innovation. Patients from across the United States and abroad seek his expertise for high-stakes neurosurgical

conditions, including meningiomas, gliomas, pituitary tumors, acoustic neuromas, cavernous malformations, arteriovenous malformations, trigeminal neuralgia and hemifacial spasm as well as and other brain tumors.

Patients seeking a consultation with Dr. Cohen-Gadol may reach his office at contact@atlasneurosurgeryinstitute.com or visit <https://www.aaroncohen-gadol.com>.

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