

George Wallace's Toes Twitch

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Alabama Governor George C. Wallace has shown the first signs of movement in his paralyzed legs in a week — an involuntary twitching of his toes that his own neurosurgeon said yesterday does not mean that he will walk again.

Nevertheless, the twitching of the toes — first spotted by a nurse at Holy Cross Hospital Sunday afternoon and induced at least twice since then by tickling his toes — encouraged both his family and his campaign aides.

"It's the beginning of a process we had hoped to see and were praying for," said Billy Joe Camp, Wallace's press secretary.

Doctors, though, were less optimistic about the involuntary movements — reflex actions that Wallace would

"It is nothing to get excited about but it is encouraging," said Dr. Joseph Shanno, the head of the Holy Cross team that operated on Wallace for five hours last Monday night after he was shot during a rally in the Laurel, Md., shopping center.

One doctor at Holy Cross, unconnected with the case but in a position to see Wallace's X-rays and test results, said the position of the bullet within the pencil-thin spinal canal indicates that the spinal cord was either cut or crushed beyond repair.

Doctors will operate on Wallace — later this week or early next week — to remove the bullet. This will give the surgeons a chance to see with their own eyes exactly how badly the cord was damaged.

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