

This One's for Wayne

Hi, my name is Kim and I was diagnosed with Acromegaly in 1999. A lot of good things happened to me in '99. I was hired on at Marine Atlantic, I won a big sum of money at bingo, and I was in a car accident. After which I ended up going to get checked out at the hospital. I ended up seeing a doctor who took one look at me and said, "Oh my God, you have acromegaly." I believe that doctor saved my life. My car accident was a blessing in disguise.

I started noticing pains in my feet when I first got up in the morning, but they would go away soon after. I was pregnant with my son when I started noticing changes in my appearance. That was back in 1985.

So for 14 years, I went on like a nut...sudden outbursts, fits of tears. My husband, god rest his soul, he used to say "Gonna be a bad one this month, eh dear". Then I would laugh and be over it, just as fast as it would flare up. We just thought it was a bad case of PMS.

The problem with this disease is, all the hundreds of symptoms, all mimic other ailments. So, the disease is often misdiagnosed. I started getting really weird looking, my eyes were bugging out. I started being mistaken for a guy...a lot. At first I was really upset about it. People really thought I was a guy at first, an honest mistake, not their fault. Most times when they realized their mistake, they would be embarrassed, and I felt sorry for them and would crack a joke about it. It's not that they are being mean; they really thought I was a "sir". I just didn't want to look like a guy, not that there is anything wrong with looking like a guy, if you are a guy.

The girls and I were talking at work one day and one of them was complaining that they hate being called Ma'am. Well it beats the hell out of being called sir, I love it when someone calls me Ma'am. LOL!

I had no idea what was wrong with me. All I knew was I was getting some ugly... old and ugly. Not that I ever thought I was good looking to start with. But this was ridiculous. Up and down, just like a new ride at the exhibition.

Some of my son's friends, back then were really confused. They didn't know whether I was his Mom or his Dad. All I could do was laugh.

The day I was told I had a tumour and it was the cause of all my problems, my aches and my pains, I felt like I won the lottery. Now I knew why I looked and acted the way I did. Now, lets deal with it. My only regret is my husband didn't live to find out what was wrong with me. He accepted me for who I was. When I was taking a twister, he would stand back and let me go. And when I was done he would help me clean up the mess. And my poor kids, what they didn't go through. And they still love me...Thanks for that

guys. Through thick and thin, Wayne was always there for me, he never turned his back on me.

We have to be positive, deep down in our gut, not just on the surface. A lot depends on our mental state. If we are depressed all the time, the disease will only feed on the depression, and then it gets the better of us. We need to stand up and take control of the disease. Don't let it control us.

Clinical Pearls

- By adapting to life with a chronic illness you move towards a healthier emotional state and take control of your life. Bad days do not have to turn into bad weeks.
- Being an active member of a support group gives you a unique opportunity to give back to newly diagnosed people with acromegaly.
- Your involvement is an inspiration to others.