



Ben's Story & Thyroid Health Days



I turned 50 in 2014 following what were three hectic years: a car accident resulting in whiplash and nine months of recuperation. Then my mom passed away followed by my younger disabled sister. So while I had found a family physician a year earlier, I was preoccupied yet I somehow felt something wasn't quite right. Yes, the accident had slowed me down; yes, the loss of two people who were important to my life had an impact but I just wasn't bouncing back the way I used to and had chalked it up to aging and maybe male menopause, something I'll eventually get around to looking into.

So when I went in for the results of my birthday physical that spring I was astounded to find out my cholesterol was extremely high. I eat well, am vegetarian and try to stay active, but then again I was slowing down. So off for more tests, and again a month later. There were tests with a cardiologist to review a nagging pain I was having in my chest, stomach issues, and a few more turning 50 things. At the time they seemed like a bunch of unrelated complaints, my checklist of items for my 'mechanic' to check over.

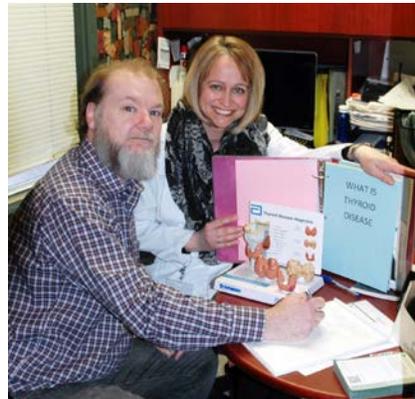
The process for me began in earnest in September – hypothyroidism and a prescription for thyroxine hormone replacement as well as cholesterol medication. For those who have begun this process, you're aware of the routine blood work. My first was in October followed by a call to "get back in here". My TSH numbers were still going in the wrong direction, up the dose, blood work, still not working, and a third increase. I was growing concerned until three days before Christmas when everything stopped working. Cold, dizzy, fatigued – if I didn't know my signs and symptoms before, I did now.

More blood work, and this time along with another increase in thyroxine, a diagnosis of Hashimoto's Hypothyroidism and a referral to an endocrinologist. I've now had my first meeting, another dosage increase, but have also started to find answers – my chest pain was related: hypothyroidism causes inflammation in the joints along the sternum, my stomach is now fine, and I'm getting closer to being me again. I tell people, "I didn't know I was sick but I'm much better now."

Along with my diagnosis, I have also become acquainted with the Thyroid Foundation of Canada. That's where I learned about Thyroid Health Days, an opportunity for those newly diagnosed

or who may have some of the symptoms to speak with a nursing professional. We talked about my medical history, general health, and medications as well as reviewed a number of symptoms – all in a safe and confidential manner. This is where I learned that a lot of my more minor complaints may very well be related to hypothyroidism and it has provided some talking points for when I see my doctor next.

I still have a ways to go, still researching and learning. As my Hashimoto's is still active I'm discovering new things like aches and pains, not that they weren't there before, it's just now I have a better understanding as to why.



Ben Benedict receives counselling for Hypothyroidism by RPN Deborah Doyle on behalf of the Thyroid Foundation of Canada, Abbott Acare and Wellington at Work



The Thyroid Health Day poster at Turner Drug Store in London, Ontario. One of many pharmacies participating across Canada

Ben Benedict is a writer and public relations professional (www.bcreative.ca) who was recently diagnosed with Hashimoto's Hypothyroidism.

Thyroid Health Days Update

Since the launch of **Thyroid Health Days**, there have been 57 pharmacies participating in most provinces across Canada. This is an ongoing initiative so be sure to check back at www.thyroid.ca to see if a **Thyroid Health Day** is coming to your area!

