



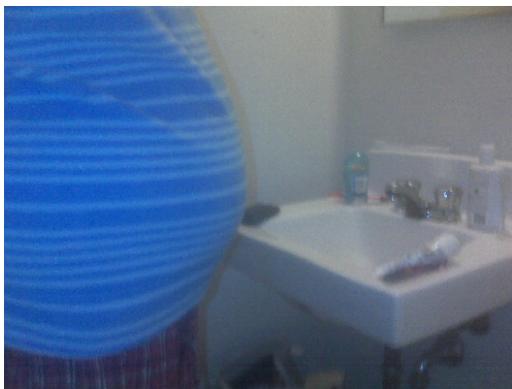
## My story living with Graves' Disease

Traci Slauenwhite



□ **I** was diagnosed about 9 years ago with Graves' disease. I was sick for a very long time. Doctors over the years had diagnosed and treated me for depression and extreme anxiety. The treatments didn't work however.

I was also diagnosed with acalculous cholecystitis. The problem with that is normally people who have been in ICU for extended periods get it, not normally healthy people. My gallbladder was removed and the doctor told me it might not help. At my check-up he told me my red blood cells were enlarged. I told my family doctor. He said it was nothing to worry about and did no tests to find out why my red blood cells were enlarged. I believe that was 2009. They were enlarged because my thyroid was low. I have test levels that came back profoundly low in 2011. That doctor said it was ok just to take my pills. I did everything I could do.



My stomach after being diagnosed with acalculous cholecystitis

One day I had a very sore throat. I went to emergency and Dr. Toft looked at my neck. He said he wanted to do a blood test, which confirmed the goitre I had and didn't realize it; it was indeed from Graves' disease.

That man changed my life forever. He gave me hope where I had absolutely none. I owe him my life.

My T4 count was the second highest my specialist had ever seen. He wasn't new either. I was in my mid 20's and I was pulled out of work, taken off salt and processed food. I was at a very real risk of developing congestive heart failure.

It was a very scary time and yet I felt reborn. After my radiation treatments I had no racing heart, no sweats. I felt better for a while. I went back to school, got my Ontario Secondary School Diploma and became a hair stylist.

For the past few years I've been having increasing body pain, muscle cramps, and extreme PMS. I was diagnosed as being bipolar as well.

Today I learned I am extremely hypo. So hypo my red blood cells are apparently huge! I've had my thyroid levels tested and I was told they were ok. Dr. Gilbert told me it would have taken years to become like this. This is Canada - how does all this happen to one person here? I'm not sure how to feel. Most of my adult life has been hampered by this. I've lost jobs, relationships and almost my life more than once.

*cont...*



Please stop this from happening to anyone else.

In closing I'd just like to add that I'm really looking forward to getting to know who I really am. I'm just sorry I had to wait till almost 40 to do it. I could write a book with everything I've been through. I'm just one person but I want to save people from this. They deserve it. ☐



Traci