

DEBBIE'S STORY

My name is Debbie Anderson. I farm with my husband in southwestern Ontario. Farm life is very active and generally, very busy, add to the mix two young children, and it is busier. To be sick a day or two is hard enough, but to feel unwell or sluggish every day certainly takes a toll. I was diagnosed with hypothyroidism after the birth of my second child in December of 1996. I remember some of the more severe symptoms I was dealing with, not knowing at the time what the prognosis would be.

The cold caused me quite a lot of pain, deep in my bones. I dreaded playing with my daughter outside in the snow and walking down the long laneway to my mailbox. Even dressed in warm clothes, I would suffer for 30 or 35 minutes once back inside. My internal furnace was not working as it should. My hair was coming out in clumps, and this embarrassed me.

I suffered weight gain and fatigue. The doctor told me that it was normal as I had a two-year-old and a newborn, I was going to feel tired. I was more than tired, I was "fall asleep while eating" tired. I was "I feel like I just ran the marathon" tired. My muscles ached and my joints were sore. This was not normal for me. I had a few appointments with the family doctor, and he thought maybe I was starting to go through menopause. This devastated me as we were still wanting another child. However, in my mind, I knew what I was dealing with now, or so I thought, so I could normalize the symptoms.

As more time lapsed, these symptoms kept getting worse and soon my menstrual cycle was crazy and my heart rate was sluggish at times. My family doctor referred me to an Endocrinologist in Chatham, Ontario.

I had several blood tests and was almost relieved when she called me and said, "you have hypothyroidism". I didn't know anything about it, but it had a name, there was medication to help, and I would feel more like myself in time.



Debbie with Grandbaby George

In 1997, I would begin taking Levothyroxine every morning, and keeping a small journal over the next couple months as I started feeling better. Fast forward to 2023- I have been taking medication every day for 26 years, and thankful for it. I have had my share of ups-and-downs, my levels fluctuating and causing me to go to hospital a couple times. I have blood tests done every 3 months currently, until everything levels out.

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I encourage people to get their neck checked. So many will suffer and not know they have thyroid disease. If you have a symptom or two, go see your health care provider. Nowadays, I enjoy everything life has to offer me, farming, family (my first grandchild), and aviation.

Debbie, in her 1977 PA28 Piper Warrior, a Christmas present from her husband



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