

Barbara McFee- ADULT FMD

I am a Registered Nurse who also served as a Coroner for many years. I have a Master's degree in Administration. My diagnosis of FMD of the right renal artery was made when I was 66 years old which is rather old according to all the literature that I have read.

I was diagnosed with hypertension in my late 30's and took one medication for many years. I never smoked, drank alcohol, always exercised and have been on a balanced diet of chicken, fish, whole grains, fruits and vegetables for many years. My mother had hypertension.

In 2001, I was in a car accident where my new car (10 days old) was totaled as I was T-boned by a man running a red light. Several months later as I was preparing to leave for Canada to help settle my mother's estate, I was making a left turn on a busy intersection and all of a sudden, I became dizzy, shaky and thought I was going to pass out so I stopped my car and someone called an ambulance and I was taken home. I went to a physician who diagnosed me with a panic attack, put me on tranquilizers and so I thought that I had a problem with driving and perhaps reacting to my mother's death.

I continued to function as an R.N. working long hours until in 2005, I collapsed with a blood pressure of 230/110. I had 7 hospital admissions with diagnoses of dehydration, pulmonary embolism, anxiety, fatigue, etc until the physician who I worked with suggested " why don't they check your kidneys". The ultrasound showed right renal artery FMD- severe- and the renal angioplasty was performed. I was so weakened by the escalating blood pressure and anti-hypertensive medications that I spent 57 days in a nursing home trying to walk and cope with the side effects of the medication. All rehabilitation patients have psychiatric consultations and when the psychiatrist came to see me and asked if I would talk to him, I replied "sure, if you were misdiagnosed 7 times prior to getting treatment for a medical condition, would you feel crazy?" He laughed and replied "well, your sense of humor is still intact".

I spent the next 5 years with a very few blood pressure elevations and then in 2010 at Xmas time I was back in the hospital with uncontrolled hypertension. I was reassured that I did not have FMD again but my cardiologist ordered a CAT scan and there is was - on the right and the left side now. In February of 2011, I had a right renal angioplasty with the radiologist using a " cutting balloon". The left side did not have a stenosis so was left alone. Two weeks later the symptoms of burning in the chest wall, escalating hypertension, and even numbness in my legs occurred. I again entered the hospital and had a cardiac angiogram and a 3rd renal angioplasty. My blood pressure is still not stable on Toprol XL 50 MGM BID, Lisinopril 20 MGM BID, Norvasc 10 MGM DAILY, Hydrochlorazide 12.5 MGM DAILY, Clonidine 0.2 Mgm Patch weekly and Clonidine 0.2 Mgm prn-usually 3 times per day.

Next week I will return for a procedure to evaluate the circulation in my right kidney. Many small vessels are involved so the outcome may not be what I want to hear. I am determined to become stable again and enjoy my independent life style for a few more years.

The biggest challenge is finding a physician and hospital staff who actually understand the disease. I have been busy passing out Pam Mace's wonderful article to health care providers in the hope that they will educate others. In 50 years, I never encountered a patient with this diagnosis. This website is invaluable allowing patients to share their experiences.

