

## Patricia Austin - ADULT FMD

My name is Patricia Auston. I have been a registered nurse for almost 30 years and specialize in Rehabilitation and Neurology. I was diagnosed with Fibromusclar Dysphagia 7 years ago at the age of 50. This is my story.



May 1, 1999

I was sitting in our rehabilitation dining room getting report from the nightshift on my team of patients, when I noticed that my heart rate was racing faster than it ever had before. A coworker asked if I felt OK and I said I wasn't sure. He then took my blood pressure which was 210/104. This is very high because my normal blood pressure is 90/50 and he said my skin color was awful, blue to be exact. I was then put into a wheelchair and rushed down to the emergency room. The doctors really could not figure out what caused my problems. I am healthy, exercise and fit for my age. After 5 hours and many tests, I was sent home on medication for my blood pressure and told to make an appointment with my primary care doctor. My blood pressure continued to run higher than normal but was controlled somewhat.

May 10, 2000

About one year later, the original problems with my heart rate and blood pressure returned. This time, I was hospitalized for extensive testing to try to find out the cause of this problem. I also knew that with continued high blood pressure, I was at risk for a stroke. I had a cardiology workup, which was found normal. Then a neurological work up which was also found normal. An endocrinologist was called in. He found nothing and suggested nephrology. It was the nephrologist that ordered a MRI of my kidneys. Mind you, this was at the end of a three week hospital stay. Well, they showed me the MRI. It looked just like there was a string of pearls in my renal arteries. The doctor said, he had only seen this one other time and that it was extremely rare. I was very thankful to at last have an answer. The next day, I had a renal angioplasty or ballooning of my renal arteries and was told I would most likely have to have this done about every 5 years. I was sent home on a blood pressure medication and my blood pressure was again within my normal range.

June 6, 2005

I had been doing just fine until out of the blue, the blood pressure problems returned. The doctor was exactly right, 5 years had gone by and it was time for a repeat angioplasty. This time, I reacted to the dye and had an anaphylactic reaction. It was very serious. With medication to counteract this, I recovered. Here it is November 2007, I have done well, and my blood pressure is controlled again. Of course it is important to eat right, exercise, get plenty of rest and do the entire wellness program. It is very important to monitor my blood pressure as it is really my only sign of trouble. I do not look forward to my next angioplasty because of the terrible reaction I experienced last time but realize that it must be done. Fibromusclar Dysphagia is not a disorder that many people even know about and I think awareness is crucial. Without proper treatment, having a stroke is a very real possibility. If you are affected by FMD, I encourage you to tell your story also. We must educate everyone, including our physicians.