

Ruth Petersen - ADULT FMD

My name is Ruth Grace Petersen. I am 50 years old, and I live in Colorado. My story is very complicated, so here is the short version.



I was first paralyzed at age 5, whole body.

My mom called our family doctor and he told her to move my chin to chest constantly. After over 24 hours, my mother and my father were exhausted, and all I could do was think and complain of the school work I was missing, I had just started kindergarten. I missed only a week, my body seemed to go back to normal again.

During my childhood, I was kept very active with a lot of sports and activities. Our family doctor knew it was a blood flow problem, but did not know what- I remember, I had to take baby aspirin for a long time.(we are talking in the early 1960's). I did ok, until my first heart attack during laparoscopy for endometriosis. I was 21 years old. Nothing was done for it. They said it was mild, but showed up on EKG..my heart attacks since, in my late 30's, early 40's showed up in symptoms and in blood work, only a couple showed on EKG.

In the late 80's to late 90's, I had leg /arm troubles and nerve troubles. I was misdiagnosed for a decade with (MS Multiple Sclerosis), by a very prominent neurologist. It wasn't till I had a massive stroke, that took my whole body I regained my right side back right away after I woke from coma. My left side to this day, I have been fighting for it back. I walk with a AFO brace on my left leg and finally I can grasp with my left hand.

It wasn't until I went to a new neurologist, that she repeated the MS spinal tap test and it was negative. All her scans showed as old/new strokes not MS. An angiogram showed 2 aneurysms and beading in my both upper inner carotids, FMD in my vertebral's at c2 level (inoperable area) and in renals. She could not say what it was, just that it is really rare. Comforting?

That was in 1998. I was told that there was no operation available that they knew of yet.

I was sent to several neurosurgeons. In 1999, One did identify that it was FMD. He gave me a referral to a doctor at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. Who, he heard had started to do this operation procedure. So off to Mayo I went.

Several trips later. I was one of the first dozen, for right side in Jan 1999, and then left was done 6 months later in August of 1999 I had right and left upper carotid vein replacements done. There was a healed aneurysm, above a very active one. I was told this was very rare to see and find a healed aneurysm. It then dawned on me. That is why I was paralyzed at age 5. Since 2003, I had my last stroke of 3 small blood clots to inner brain, due to medication problem. small tia's.

Surprisingly in 2003, my FMD went and stayed dormant until 2007. When it was found in celiac and right renal. However, As of my last angiogram 2007, it showed my FMD was dormant again. No FMD was seen or found. Except I do have a very small aneurysm at the end of my right renal artery. Somehow during all this, I managed to have 3 wonderful

healthy bright sons. However, my marriage did not survive. I am not alone. I have been with my boyfriend for 14 years now.

Interesting point, when I was 25 years old, I learned at my father's funeral, I was adopted. I was told by my mother that I am 1/2 Norwegian and 1/2 Italian. My birth mother was in a boarding school on Staten Island. I've filed with the state (NY closed adoption records) but haven't heard anything. Everything suddenly fell into place, as to my past health mysteries and why it wasn't related to my parents.