

## ***J41 Guillain-Barre Syndrome***

October 2009

Intro: The symptoms came on fast. Within weeks the woman you're about to meet went from being completely healthy to lying in the intensive care unit, unable to move, struggling to breathe. A victim of Guillain-Barre syndrome. Listen to her story of sickness and triumph.

### **Video**

**Total running time 1:33**

**CG :18 to :24**

**Beth DeVries**

**Had Guillain-Barre**

### **Audio**

COOKING BREAKFAST IS A SIMPLE TASK. BUT TO BETH DEVRIES, IT'S MUCH MORE.

"I COUDLN'T EVEN HOLD THE EGG, LET ALONE CRACK IT."

YOU SEE, BETH SURVIVED TWO EPISODES OF RECURRENT GUILLAIN-BARRE SYNDROME. SYMPTOMS STARTED IN HER FEET.

"I COULDN'T FEEL THE FLOOR."

NUMBNESS AND WEAKNESS PROGRESSED QUICKLY THROUGHOUT HER BODY.

"I WALKED INTO THE KITCHEN AND I FELL ON THE FLOOR FLAT ON MY FACE AND I COULDN'T GET UP. I

COULDN'T MOVE.”

BETH ENDED UP IN THE INTENSIVE CARE UNIT.

“I SAID GOODBYE TO MY PARENTS THREE TIMES BECAUSE I DIDN'T THINK I WAS GOING TO MAKE IT THROUGH THE NIGHT.”

FATHER AND SON TEAM DRS. PETER AND JAMES DYCK STUDY GUILLAIN-BARRE SYNDROME AND RELATED ILLNESSES. THEY SAY THE DISEASE USUALLY HAPPENS AFTER A VIRAL INFECTION.

“YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM GETS CONFUSED. SO INSTEAD OF ATTACKING THE VIRUS, IT ATTACKS YOUR NERVES. AND USUALLY WHAT HAPPENS IS IT CAUSES DEMYELINATION. MYELIN IS INSULATION AROUND NERVE FIBERS.”

IT HELPS NERVES CONDUCT

**CG :40 to :48**

**P. James Dyck, M.D.**

**Mayo Clinic**

**Standup**

**CG 1:05 to 1:09**

**Vivien Williams**

**Reporting**

**VO: to Beth cooking**

SIGNALS. IF YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM ATTACKS NERVES, THE INSULATION BREAKS DOWN. NERVES DON'T CONDUCT AS FAST AS NORMAL, OR THEY DON'T CONDUCT AT ALL. MUSCLES BECOME WEAK OR SIMPLY DON'T WORK. GUILLAIN-BARRE IS VERY SCARY, BUT MOST PEOPLE, LIKE BETH, DO RECOVER. TREATMENT INVOLVES WHAT'S CALLED PLASMAPHERESIS, DURING WHICH BLOOD IS "WASHED" AND RETURNED TO THE BODY. PATIENTS MAY ALSO HAVE INFUSIONS OF IMMUNOGLOBULIN. BOTH PREVENT THE IMMUNE SYSTEM FROM ATTACKING NERVES. AFTER MORE THAN A YEAR IN THE HOSPITAL AND MANY MONTHS OF RECOVERY, BETH IS ALMOST BACK TO NORMAL. ABLE TO LIVE THE

LIFE THAT WAS BRIEFLY TAKEN  
AWAY FROM HER, FOR MEDICAL  
EDGE, I'M VIVIEN WILLIAMS.

Anchor tag:

For more information on Guillain-Barre Syndrome and related illnesses, visit our Website at...[STATIONS: Per the licensing agreement, please provide a link from your station's website to <http://www.mayoclinic.org> or voice tag "mayoclinic.org" for more information.]