Dear Gillian,

I hope this reaches you well. I am writing today to tell you about the way I was told I have MS.

On my third consultation at Rosshall, after numerous GP visits, the neurologist examined me, had another look at my brain scan and then came out with it: "You have Multiple Sclerosis."

"Woah!" I thought, "That was quick. Is he sure?"

Okay, so it wasn't too much of a surprise – after all, he was a consultant who specialised in MS and the other consultants I had seen previously had all mentioned MS as well as Dr Google (bad, do not google illnesses) but it was still a slight shock.

I had been living with numbness, balance problems and fatigue for over a year, so getting the diagnosis was just confirming it, but it still seemed strange to think that I actually had this weird disease (I am sure you will agree, that having a numb bottom and feet feeling like you are walking in snow, is indeed pretty weird).

As the consultant went over the diagnosis with me, and my future husband - it was a month before our wedding, I remember thinking, "Oh God, how do I tell my mum and dad this?" and then I asked if it was Relapsing Remitting MS or the more serious Primary Progressive MS.

I was assured it was the less serious Relapsing Remitting MS (RRMS), which was a comfort. He asked if I had questions and that was my only one - why does that always happen? And then the minute you walk out the door, *bam!* about a hundred questions come to you.

After going through treatment options, I was told an appointment for an MS nurse would be winging its way to me and that I would start on medication after our wedding.

Sheez, what a buzz-kill to go through one week after a fantastic hen weekend in Edinburgh and just a month to go before our big day – but I wasn't going to let it get me down, why should I? It is my life after all and I choose to enjoy it!

My fiancé (now amazing husband who has been brilliant) kept asking if I was ok, but the most worrying thing was telling my lovely parents. Mum took it.... well as a mum would, quite badly. But once she knew I was positive and the advances in MS medication, then she was pretty upbeat about it all – Dad was the same, and they have been as supportive as they always have been.

When we got home, we ate tomato soup (however if I'd known I would be documenting it, I would definitely have gone for something more adventurous, like say... oysters) and then I went into work for my Saturday backshift working on the Daily Record website. Funnily enough, I didn't get a lot of work done that night, but I didn't feel scared or anxious, more relief that I finally knew what was going on.

The doctor advised me to take some time off work so I could recover from my previous relapse (numb bum x 100 and tingly feet and rubbish balance). The time off let me rest properly and get back to my normal self (my friend getting us amazing seats at the Bon Jovi gig helped immensely too).

It has been seven months since the diagnosis and life is great. I do weekly injections of the disease-modifying drug, Avonex, which slows down the progression of the disease and can reduce the severity and number of relapses.

I don't let MS get in the way of my life, however I know I am lucky that my symptoms are manageable, and I am eternally grateful for the support and information given to me and to my family by the MS Society. They are an amazing charity and I plan to host the Bride Parade event later in the year to raise funds for them – I hope you will come Gillian!

I hope your health is good at the moment and that life is treating you well!

Kindest regards,

Carla Callaghan x