

ARTHENSIA'S TB STORY: AN OVER HEARD CONVERSATION



When I overheard my doctor discussing TB symptoms I said, "That's it!"

It took a year for me to get a diagnosis, and by that point, I had fluid in my lungs and stomach and an enlarged liver. It started with a two-week-long sore throat, unlike any I'd ever had. I got over it, but then I started suffering from post-nasal drip, which was unusual for me. My GP gave me nasal sprays and drops for over a year and a half, but the symptoms wouldn't go away.

I tried to help myself with Benylin syrup, which seemed to work temporarily. My GP still referred me for an x-ray, but it showed nothing. Soon, I was experiencing tiredness and dizziness, which I thought was anaemia. My stomach became hard and then swelled prominently around my navel. I felt cold one moment and very hot the next. I went back to my GP, who was baffled and referred me to the hospital for a scan.

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I went home not knowing what to do. Within a week, I felt much worse. At the hospital, a doctor asked if I'd been in contact with TB. I overheard him discussing the symptoms with a junior doctor and was amazed when I said, "That's it!" I couldn't believe my GP hadn't diagnosed me earlier.



At that point, I had lost a lot of weight, but my stomach looked like I was six months pregnant. I had fluid in my lung and stomach, an enlarged liver, and my period had stopped. Thankfully, I went to the hospital when I did because everything got worse after that. Once the biopsy confirmed it, they started my treatment. I was off work for eight months and had to have a blood transfusion because I was so anaemic.

I eventually regained my weight and my body healed, although my lungs remained delicate, and a lymph node behind my stomach is permanently enlarged. I've learned that you don't have to travel to get TB; it's around and will always be around. I urge everyone to be persistent with their GP. I was, but not enough, and I almost paid the price.

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