

0 for 2



When I was first diagnosed, I remember sitting in my neurologist's office at the time in Vermont, which was quite far from home. My motto is "laugh or cry" over tough situations, and I wanted to be an easy patient for the staff. I turned to my parents after the official MS diagnosis and smiled and said, "At least it's not diabetes! I could never imagine injecting medication. As long as that never happens, I'll make it through this." I swear, my neurologist turned pale white.

That was the beginning of my two-and-a-half year journey with Copaxone (which ended abruptly when I formed new lesions back in 2016).

Since my diagnosis, I haven't left the bathroom—I have to urinate probably every 30 minutes. That's just a part of who I am now, and I am not ashamed! After seeing a urologist, I again remember saying to him, "I don't mind having the need to pee all the time, as long as I **can** pee. As long as I can pee when I have to go, I'll make it through anything."

Back in April of this year, I spent some time in my local emergency room for unbearable flank pain I was **convinced** was unrelated to MS. I still don't have clear cut answers as to what happened that put me there, but I do know a few things now:

1. One of my kidneys is smaller than it's supposed to be
2. My bladder isn't emptying completely when I urinate

To put it bluntly, peeing has officially become a chore. The amount of effort to go half the time is on par with pushing out a stubborn bowel movement (sorry, but I'm convinced at least half of you know what I'm talking about and/or have experienced this!). I urinate, I stand up

and jump around, or take a lap, and sit back down and that only works about half of the time. I'll make it work though, I'm definitely not okay with being catheterized yet.

I am officially 0-2 for statements about what I can handle when overcoming my MS. Every time I recognize something that will set me back, it comes creeping up as a very relevant and often very frightening issue.

The gist of what I'm getting at, however, is that despite these major setbacks, I am still overcoming my MS. I am still getting through all of these issues and I am still keeping my head held high. Always know that you are **never** alone in this battle-there are others experiencing what you are.

With each setback, we become stronger. We are strongest when we support one another and work together! No matter the challenges at hand, we will overcome any challenge MS presents - one tough bathroom trip at a time.