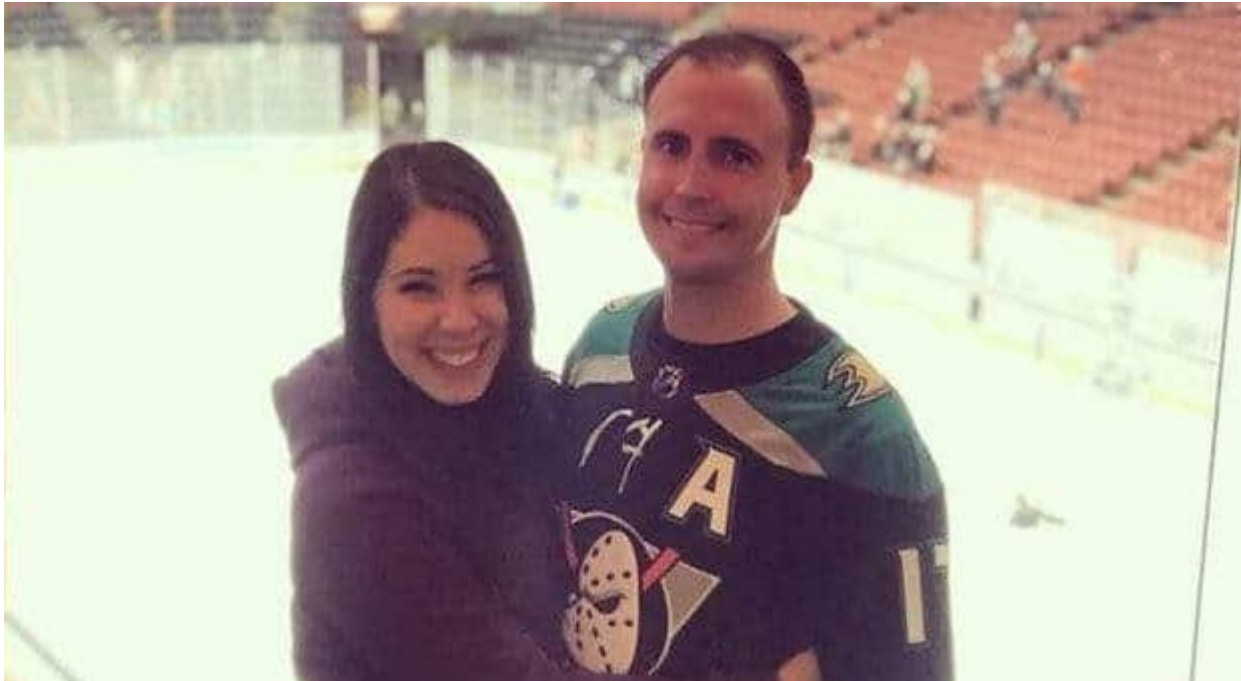


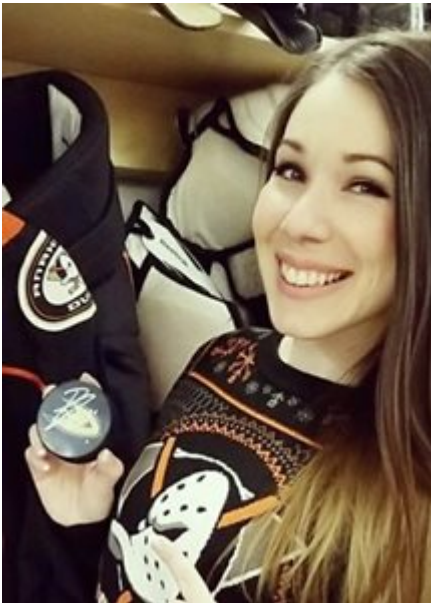
Ready, Set, MS: My Sudden and Not-So-Surprising Diagnosis



I specifically remember driving away from work on a Friday afternoon feeling like I had somehow hit my elbow and it was tingling. “Weird,” I thought, as I shrugged it off. I was headed to one of the last Anaheim Ducks games of the season, and I was so excited. It was late March and a group of friends and I were going to watch from a suite, which would make it a memorable night for more than one reason.

I woke up to a beautiful sunny, lazy Saturday morning to take my dog, Cooper, out for a walk. I noticed that the same feeling in my elbow from the day before seemed to have migrated to both hands. As we walked around the community, the same sensation seemed to radiate up my legs from my feet, leaving me feeling a bit unsteady. I jumped in the shower, and the numbness and tingling seemed to wrap around my entire torso. Immediately, my inner monologue shouted: MS.

Seems like a bit of a jump, right? Well, not exactly.



Eight years earlier, my brother was unexpectedly diagnosed with MS, which introduced my family to this new world. What I was feeling seemed exactly like what he had described. On a concerned, yet determined whim, I set up an appointment with my primary care doctor first thing Monday morning, and she referred me to a local neurologist. Within a whirlwind three months, I had taken tests, MRIs, blood work and been referred to an MS specialist. In June 2019, the specialist told me I unequivocally had multiple sclerosis.

“Do you have any doubt in your mind about your diagnosis, or any questions I can clarify for you?” Perhaps surprisingly, my response was no.

Relief is not typically the first reaction people have, but it was the first thing I felt. I was ready to take action, knowing I could now have a plan in place and could get moving on treatment. While my specialist was scrolling through each slide of my MRIs, I felt validated seeing there was something tangible as an explanation for the symptoms I had been experiencing over the past few months. We discussed our plan, options and suggestions for therapies and what our appointments would look like over the next few months.

Within a week, I was on my first DMT: Glatiramer Acetate. It felt like learning a new language and needing to take my own healthcare by the horns. Numerous phone calls back and forth with insurance, pharmaceutical companies and specialty pharmacies, I was trying to sort through whatever my “new normal” would be. It felt incredibly hectic, but it felt like moving forward.

Five months into this new diagnosis, and I am grateful to say I am adjusting. From a family who was already familiar with MS, to a loving and supportive partner who happens to be a registered nurse, I feel incredibly blessed to be in the position I am, considering the circumstances. No road is without its bumps, but I can’t help but appreciate the company on this journey into a new season of my life.