

November 17, 2012

No News Isn't Always Good News

As I recall, my last update was made on 10/26/12, just a few days after surgery. In re-reading my update, I was so optimistic post surgery. Without hearing an update from me since, I can see where you might think no news is good news. Unfortunately, that has not been the case. ... read on...

On Saturday, October 27th, I got very sick and suddenly began convulsing. It was extremely scary as I had no control of the muscle contractions and shakes that were happening to my entire body, including my recently repaired knee. I ended up in the Emergency Room at Ft. Atkinson Hospital where they juked me up with morphine and fluids. Ironically, my ER nurse was a client of mine years ago before she retired her horse and got out of riding. I was in good hands and was extremely thankful for that. The doctors decided my body just simply had enough of the drugs (remember I was on a large dosage of Oxycodone at the time). After a few hours in the ER, I returned home, exhausted to put it mildly.

The next week, I was back at the Dr. Wollager's office to get my stitches removed. Unlike in the past, I was not faint or light headed while he removed them. Yah, guess I was feeling tough that day ;) I explained to Dr. W how I had been feeling so crappy with flu like symptoms. I had a low grade fever around 99.5-100 degrees consistently, was nauseous, and miserable. He thought the knee looked great, including the incisions which were healing nicely, so told me I probably had bad luck and got the flu at an inconvenient time. He recommended seeing my family physician if the symptoms continued.

The following week, I started physical therapy even though I still felt like I had the flu. Therapy went well on Tuesday and Thursday, especially since we weren't able to do too much besides get the knee cap moving and some leg lifts to try and regain some resemblance of a quadricep and calf muscle on that right leg. During PT, I mentioned to my therapist that there was a bright red hot spot on my skin near the outside of my thigh near my knee. He thought maybe it was from my brace and I had no reason to disagree with that theory.

On Friday, November 9th, I made an appointment for 5:00 PM to see Dr. Kazi, my regular physician here in Lake Mills. After explaining my symptoms he asked me to take off my knee brace so he could see the knee. His facial expression changed as he explained to me how he did NOT like the looks of my knee. It was bright red and on fire to the touch...classic infection. He put me on oral antibiotics and told me if it changed at all over the weekend, I should get to the ER immediately. He told me to see Dr. W on Monday no matter what. I left his office scared and frustrated to put it mildly.

By Sunday, the redness was moving up and down my leg – it was to the middle of my thigh and about the top third of my calf. Sh#@!!!! So, I called Mom and she took me to Meriter Hospital's ER in Madison. After jamming an IV into the top of my left hand, they started fluids and then called in the Orthopedic doctor on call from Dr. W's office. The resident arrived and performed a tap on my knee to determine if there was fluid and infection in the joint. Even after begging for ANY type of sedation or numbing, there was nothing and he jammed a big ole' needle under my knee cap not once, not twice, not even three times, but FOUR times trying to find fluid. Holy schnikes did that hurt. Unfuckin believable. The good news was that there was no fluid drawn from the tap. Whew. They didn't have to rush me to the OR to reopen the knee and flush the joint. Thank God they thought it was cellulites in my skin. Instead, they gave me IV antibiotics and told me to see Dr. W on Monday.

Monday I did just that, trekked in to see Dr. W. He agreed, this was nothing to mess around with and that we had to treat the infection aggressively. I went from his office , directly to Meriter hospital which is conveniently directly across the street. They treated me with IV antibiotics and kept me there until Thursday. Of course, there are a million little stories I can share on my stay...typical Shelly luck type stuff. For example, the nurse couldn't get the IV started in my right arm after chasing around my vein, she quit and went to find help. The other nurse got it in, over the same spot mind you, and they started the IV antibiotics. Suddenly, the needle in my arm really started to hurt. Then, my arm began to hurt just like the needle spot. I looked down and saw my arm turning red and reacting to the drug. Ahhh! I called the nurse and she agreed, it was a reaction. Lovely. So, another gal came up and put an IV in my left arm -- she rocked it...felt nothing! I asked her for her card for future IV needs ;) She then looked up the drug I was on and learned that it's known for damaging veins. So, she diluted the drug with saline and slowed down the drip rate. That worked all week and I didn't have to have more IV's installed all over. And, yes, I have a lovely bruise on my right arm...sigh... I also got a shot in my belly to prevent blood clots. That's an experience. Again, I have a lovely bruise. I won't even get into how many ice packs broke and leaked through my clothing and through all the bedding. Again, I have soooo many stories to tell on my experience!

Thursday, they sprung me from the hospital, sending me home with oral antibiotics. After one night home, I was back to Dr. Kazi's office on Friday. When I lost most of the taste on my tongue and looked in the mirror and saw what looks like mold on my tongue, I knew I had to go see Dr. Kazi as I was getting Thrush on my tongue. So, on top of all the other drugs I'm taking, I get to swish my mouth with nasty meds and swallow it (preventing the bacteria from getting in my throat). Ugh.

The good news in all of this, is that today, Saturday, seven weeks from my injury date, I FINALLY feel better. I'm so very hopeful that I'm now over all the "bonus" features I've incurred since the accident and surgery. I'm very, very, very anxious to move forward with life. I know I have awful weeks ahead of me in physical therapy. But, I'm using the same therapist I used three years ago when I blew my ACL on my left knee. So I am confident he will bend, pull, push, and force me back into shape as he did last time. And, I will also be starting PT for my rotator cuff tear. I'm extremely hopeful I can avoid surgery on that shoulder...especially with the luck I had on this last surgery.

And, for those of you who have sent me cards, flowers, cards and well wishes, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU! The support has been overwhelming and truly has helped keep me from crossing over the edge into feeling bad for myself. Undoubtedly, this has been a trying time for me from so very many angles. The support from friends, family, and clients has been overwhelming and words cannot express my appreciation for the same. Even with all this bad luck, I'm blessed to be surrounded by such wonderful, considerate, loving people. Thank you, over and over.