

7 Year Progress Report

By Brenda Frandsen

May, 2007 was my 7 year anniversary of beginning my road to recovery from fibromyalgia. Here is a list of the improvements I have made since I first visited Dr. Paul St. Amand in May, 2000!

Everything used to hurt! Many mornings I would awake and complain to my husband that “I feel like I’ve been run over by a truck”. My hands, feet, hips, neck, shoulders, and back---everything seemed to be affected. Occasionally, even my breastbone hurt. The inside of my knees sometimes bothered me so much that it was difficult to sleep on my side which was my preferred sleeping position. The thing that was so weird was that the pains would move around. One day they would be in one place. The next day they would be somewhere else. Now, I walk 2 miles a day, 5 days a week with virtually no pain. Three days a week I spend an hour with a personal trainer doing weight training. My strength has improved three-fold and my achiness is completely gone.

Extreme fatigue: As a former “workaholic”, it was very difficult for me to cope with a complete lack of energy. I persuaded my doctor to prescribe thyroid medication which helped some, but I still didn’t have the energy that I felt should be normal for someone my age. Before beginning the guaifenesin protocol, I took two (or more!) naps a day. Now I rarely lie down during the day. Before guaifenesin, I didn’t sleep well at night. Now, I usually get a full 7 hours. of sleep each night and almost never suffer from insomnia. Four years ago, I stopped taking thyroid medication and my lab tests confirm that my thyroid was still operating within the normal range. Although I still suffered from some symptoms of hypothyroidism (cold all the time, thinning hair, elevated cholesterol, low blood pressure, poor memory, inability to lose weight), once I started on the Iodine Protocol, most of these problems have improved dramatically.

Travel nightmares: Before guaifenesin, travel was very painful. I would put pillows under my arms, feet, and bottom. It was impossible to get comfortable, so I would usually end up lying down in the back seat for most of the trip. Last summer my husband and I did an 10,000 mile cross-country (and cross-Canada) car trip, and I enjoyed every minute of the adventure!

Acne, mottled or blotchy skin: When I was a teenager, I went to my doctor complaining about a rash on my upper arms. He said it was “genetic” and there was nothing he could do. Sure enough, at least half of my daughters have the same “genetic” rash on their arms. Dr. St. Amand has also diagnosed **all six** of my daughters with fibromyalgia! From what I know now, it appears that fibromyalgia is more “environmental” than genetic. All of us have an iodine deficient diet---as do most Americans! Also, I had severe acne as a young adult (beginning in college), and my acne lasted until I was 50 years old!! Three of my six daughters have had bad acne problems. I also developed brown mottled patches (like “gloves”) on my forearms. I had assumed that these were “age related”, but Dr. Devin Starlanyl described the same thing on her arms---so I thought there might have been a connection with the FMS. Sure enough, the brown “gloves” on my arms have now completely disappeared.

Hair loss: 12 years ago, I was sure that I was going bald---like both of my father’s sisters did. As each year passed, my hair got thinner and thinner. After taking guaifenesin for 5 years my hair grew back quite nicely, and it no longer fell out by the handful! Adding iodine to my diet has made my hair grow back even thicker.

Frequent headaches/migraines: I used to have a headache EVERY SINGLE DAY. I was taking 3-4 Imitrex a week, along with a lot of OTC pain relievers and an occasional Co-Tylenol or Percocet. Now I have only an occasional headache which usually responds very well to Tylenol. By the way, it’s OK to continue taking most pain medications while you are taking guaifenesin or iodine. Eventually, most patients are able to wean off of all their medications for pain, depression, sleep, etc.

Hand pain: I experienced both pain and numbness in my hands. I was sure that I had Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. Now I spend hours a day on the computer with no hand problems.

Chronic constipation and hemorrhoids: I was constipated for 40 years, (no exaggeration.) even though I took Metamucil every day. Thanks to guaifenesin and the magnesium oxide (400 mg. twice a day) suggested by Dr. St. Amand, I am totally cured of this horrible problem---and no more Metamucil! The hemorrhoids that I had suffered from since college days are gone, too! When I switched from taking guaifenesin to taking iodine, my bowel movements became even more regular.

Colon and Bladder problems: I had two severe bouts of colitis, one of which was diagnosed as ulcerative colitis because of all the blood in the stool. This occurred when I was newly married (38 years ago) and lasted about a year. Since that time, insurance companies refused to cover me for colon problems. I also suffered from multiple yeast infections and bladder infections in my child-bearing years. Last year, I had a coloscopy and the doctor certified that my colon was completely normal, with no sign of disease. Now our insurance company no longer excludes my colon from coverage! Plus, I haven’t had a yeast or bladder infection since I’ve been using guaifenesin or iodine.

Leg cramps, knee pain, foot pain: These used to be frequent problems. I even spent \$300 for special orthotic inserts from a podiatrist which didn’t help at all. My foot and leg pains are totally GONE now! Also, taking magnesium at night before bed is very important for muscle relaxation.

Difficulty climbing stairs and loss of strength: The muscles in the top of my thigh seemed to be weakened even though I tried to exercise almost every day. I also experienced a tremendous loss of strength and muscle tone. I always needed help bringing the groceries in from the car. Now, after taking guaifenesin and working with a personal trainer (who also has recovered from fibromyalgia using this regimen), I can press over 200 lbs. with my legs and lift 70 lbs. with my arms. Because of the exercises I have been doing, my body is in the best shape in years!

Depression: I think most of my depression was a result of feeling like my health was gone forever. Thanks to guaifenesin, probiotics and iodine, I am well again---and the depression is gone!

Memory loss, brain fog: Before my retirement, I was Vice President of Product Development for a computer software company and was accustomed to making elaborate presentations to executives on a regular basis. It was frightening to find myself afraid to talk to people because I couldn't think of the words I wanted to say. "Fibrofog", as it has been called, may be one of the worst parts of this disease! Things got so bad that my hand couldn't make the letters when I tried to write. I really thought I might have Alzheimer's disease. This was very scary for me since that is what my mother had! (I believe that she may have been misdiagnosed and really had FMS!) Now, I can think clearly and don't have problems writing. I still have to make "to-do" lists---but what "normal" 62 year old doesn't?

Unusual thirst: I used to have to take a bottle of water with me EVERYWHERE. I literally couldn't go to the corner grocery without one. I also had to wake up several times in the night to get a drink. Now, I only have to take water on long trips, since beginning the iodine protocol, I rarely wake up to get a drink at night.

Breastbone soreness, sore spots on the head, tender armpit lymph nodes: These used to be major sources of concern. It used to hurt to wash my hair! These symptoms are gone!

Sensitive skin: I couldn't stand to wear a normal bra because it was too painful. I switched to a looser "all-in-one" type of bra which was more comfortable in some ways (didn't pinch around the middle) but was less comfortable in other ways (too restricting). I also had to cut out tags in my clothes because they were too irritating. Now I can wear regular bras, and tags aren't a problem any more.

Shoulder and hip pain: My "frozen" shoulder is gone, as is the hip pain that I experienced while doing my morning walking.

Muscle twitches: I used to get these around my eyes, in my legs, etc. They seem to have completely disappeared. In fact, I cannot remember the last time I had a twitch!

Bad breath: Before taking guaifenesin and probiotics I had "dragon breath"! It's much better now---at least my family no longer complains.

Symptoms of TMJ and VV: These are not symptoms that I had before I started guaifenesin, however, I have "cycled" through both of these very annoying symptoms during my reversal. According to Dr. St. Amand, this is not unusual. The duration of the cycling was relatively short---thank goodness! I highly recommend the use of pure Emu oil to relieve the pain and discomfort of vulvar pain syndrome.

Acceptance of feeling bad all the time, hopelessness of this disease: Sometimes I was afraid that I would ignore some potentially serious problem in my body because I began to think feeling pain everywhere was normal. Pain is supposed to be a signal to us that something is wrong. Fibromyalgics learn to live with the pain, so we no longer trust our bodies to tell us when there is a real problem. Guaifenesin did more than just give me hope---it gave me my life back!

Other nice side effects of guaifenesin:

Softer skin - my husband really notices this! I don't need to use body lotions any more.

My eyesight has improved. Much to the surprise of my eye doctor, I no longer require the prescription glasses I've had since my 20's!

Being on a relatively low carb diet for the past 10 years has produced some nice results:

Stable weight

Elimination of cravings

Elimination of reactive hypoglycemia symptoms. (except when I "cheat"!)

Elimination of digestive problems (heartburn, indigestion, and gas)

About two years ago I stopped eliminating salicylates from my topical products---as required by the guaifenesin protocol. Much to my surprise (and joy!), my symptoms did not return and my "maps" stayed clear. A little over a year ago, I stopped taking guaifenesin and continued on with probiotic therapy. Again, my fibromyalgia remained in remission. Six months ago I began supplementing with 12.5 mg. of Iodoral (iodine/iodide) daily, and now even my hypothyroidism symptoms have greatly improved. I am healthier than I have been in 15 years---even though I am 15 years older! The purpose of this website is to share my success with others who may be suffering from fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue. You **CAN** regain your health!!