Spring Hibernating...?

April 5, 2009 By David Capogna

I'm not sure what bears do in the woods, because I'm not a bear in ANY sense of the word!

Preferredly, I find myself closer to a night owl, and don't mess with me around 3pm because I'm in the zone. In no way am I a morning person, and since I was diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver, I've been force into a regimen of 80mg of Nadolol, a type of beta blocker, per day. Fatigue is much to wimpy of a word, this med takes me from nocturnal to wanting to sleep thirteen to fifteen hours a day, and still have trouble getting out of bed. You can see how working at POZ was quite a readjustment to my schedule. Previously, I could last two days of seven or eight hours of sleep, before I zonked out for fifteen odd hours. Additionally, Nadolol results in me getting winded climbing up the subway stairs, curtail running across streets right before the signal changes, and puts an end to sprinting to the next corner to catch a bus. I can only a handle a little bit cardio at the gym, cycling to and from on the bike patch (level ground,) and swimming, which I adore, but am limited to five pool length at a time. Yoga and Pilates suit me very well, they're "low-impact" or do not increase my heart rate for a prolong period of time. HELLO...I'm functioning as someone twice my age, or worse, a person who weights 350 lbs.??? Meanwhile, I'm 38, 5' 9", 135lbs., with a 28" inch waist!

In the past month, I've been suffering from a neuropathy "flare-up," primarily in my feet and calves. It started out with severe cramps, walking was painful and very slow, and descending stairs excruciating. I found myself back at the neurologist, getting zapped from the electrodes for the nerve tests...ah, just another day living with side effects from my AIDS meds! My body was in dire need of potassium, as least that's what the doc said. Bananas, bananas, bananas and tonic - who'd-a-thought tonic has potassium in it! Also, the worse aftertaste; I almost hurled after a few sips - YUCK! Obviously, I'm no drinker, my Preppy Badge would have to be return because I could down a bunch of G&T's (gin and tonics) back at the old county club. (Color me Preppy Handbook!) Finally, Gabapentin was prescribed, a drug originally developed for partial seizures (I suffered from full-on seizures, and multiple partial seizures after my stroke.) That kind of made more sense when I started researching...something I DON'T do enough of. You have to know what you're putting in your body. I'm learning the hard way, believe me. By the way, there is an end to this story. Gabapentin is also uses to treat anxiety, also a mood stabilizer, and people suffer from insomnia...EXSQUEEZE ME? This drug was making me EVEN more tired, but I was experiencing less pain even time I took another daily dose. The Gabapentin was working, slowly, but still

working. I don’t like tonic, but I detest coffee, so I increased my Starbuck’s venti iced chai tea to three cups of a day (caffeine and tons of sugar, yum!!!) Still dragging myself through the day, but productive.

Last week something suddenly chance, I had lost by sense of urgency regarding my sleeping patterns. On Tuesday, coming from a morning at the dentist I crashed on my bed at 2pm, barely taking my shoes off, and slept until eleven, woke up just to take off my contacts, have a snack, ingest my pm meds and retired another seven hours until morning! It took me a few days to really that I couldn’t see the forest for the trees, or more specifically the dogwood trees, which are now blooming. It was just my damn allergies! Allergies obviously affect people in different ways: watery eyes, sun sensitivity, congestion, running noses, etc…or in my case, comatose. How brilliant to feel normal like “more than 6 million people” who have allergies. I still don’t really accept myself on Nadolol and Gabapentin, but I’m feeling so absolutely ordinary on Flonase and Sudafed!

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