

September 1st 2023 was one of the most terrifying days of my life. It all started I believe near the beginning of 2020 when my grandma noticed my irregular heartbeat, and blood pressure results. One day we took a visit to the doctor and after taking my blood pressure she immediately wanted to talk to him. She was worried for me and wanted to know what was going on and why my blood pressure was so high.

"I've noticed her blood pressure has been high every time we pay a visit here. Is there a possibility that her body is going through something" She asked

"I'm not quite sure" the doctor replied briefly "Let me pull up her recent visits. Has she ever said anything to you about how she feels while it's happening?" he asked as he scrolled through his computer

"Well she has told me at times that she felt like her heart was beating out of her chest, but nothing other than that" she said moving my hair from my face as she spoke.

I was only 15 at the time and I didn't know what she was talking about nor implying to. I had always felt my heart was beating out of my chest but I never thought much of it. I just assumed it was my anxiety, but when I was a kid I didn't fully understand it in my head. I thought it was normal. He was quiet as he looked through my recent files and we waited patiently for an answer. He sighed as he signed off of his computer and looked at us with a stern expression.

"May I have your permission to run some labs on her as this may be very serious and will give us the chance to see what is going on with her blood pressure, it's not normal."

At that moment I was scared, spooked even but more confused than anything. I didn't know what was happening and that same day I was taken back to the labs. I didn't cooperate, I was scared of needles. I had to be held down, I was scared, crying, hurt and felt somewhat of betrayal as my grandma was putting me through this but I also knew it had to be done in order to see if something was wrong.

The doctors called about a week after taking the blood test and asked to see us as he has something very important to discuss with us. It was obvious that something was clearly wrong as I was rushed out of bed that morning and we immediately made our way to the hospital. We met him in his office as we both sat down in our chairs, my emotions were scattered as I could tell by the look on his face that this couldn't be good. We greeted each other and began to converse and the deeper in the conversation we got the more I felt my emotions taking over. That's when he broke the news to us, he had told me that I was diagnosed with hyperthyroidism which is a disease in the thyroid where too much hormone is produced in the thyroid causing the thyroid to enlarge and increase metabolism. He told us that if not treated things could worsen and I could suffer with Graves disease which is a system disorder of the gland in the throat, but it could also transfer to the eyes causing them to swell around the eyes making the bulge out if left untreated.

It was so much to take in at once, so much information. That's when I felt like my world was falling apart. After hearing everything I fell into depression and struggled with school my 10th grade year. I had a hard time sleeping, eating, and staying focused on anything. I was having a hard time with my mental health as well. I had thought that was bad until last year when my doctors in Atlanta told me that I needed to go through surgery because I had been taking the medication far too long and it could be dangerous. That day my body reacted on its

own. I blacked out and my body gave out on me. My fear was having to go through surgery, something I never wanted to do. I cried, I thought about it and told myself I had to be brave. The day I told my grandma I would go through surgery I was listening to my heart and not my brain. There were many times I started to overthink and tell myself this was a bad idea and I shouldn't go through with it but I was already so close and I didn't want to back out. I wanted to overcome my fear.

When the day finally came and I was getting dressed and getting in the hospital bed, instant regret filled my body as I signed the consent forms. Soon after I was given anesthesia and I had fallen asleep thirty minutes later, it was very clear I no longer knew what was going on as everything went black. That night I woke up confused I didn't know where I was at and was a little panicked that I woke up in the room alone but I could hear the faint sound of my mom talking in the background which helped me from freaking out, They were on the other side of the door talking with the doctor but it was clear that they were in shock and panic in which I didn't know why. I sat there quietly as I listened to the conversation on the other side of the cracked door.

"Ma'am I understand your up-" he said briefly before being interrupted by the sound of my mom's voice talking over him.

"You hurt my baby, she could have died. You were supposed to be the best, you ensured her safety" she yelled her voice shaking before breaking into a small sob.

"Ma'am we didn't mean any harm to your daughter, we didn't know the risks were so high, we apologize-" he was cut off yet again. I could hear the hurt in my mom's voice as she spoke over him again.

"I can't forgive you for what you have done, my daughter stopped breathing and was bleeding out, let alone you damaged her vocal cord during the process. At that same time you sent out nurses to tell us she was going great and everything was going well." She spoke harshly as she broke into another sob.

Hearing that sentence I was in shock, I had almost died in the hands of the doctors whom I was told I could trust. I couldn't help but feel lied to as tears rolled down my cheeks. I felt a heavy pain in my chest as I heard the news and the hurt in my mother's voice. I couldn't bear the thought that not only did the doctors put them through that but I did as well. I knew how they felt about the surgery and furthermore how risky it was knowing that my thyroid was already very much enlarged. I was zoned out in my thoughts for what felt like ages. I found myself waking up not even realizing I had fallen asleep any time earlier except this time I woke up with my mom and grandma in the room with me,

This was a very traumatic experience for me. The thought of my life ending at such a young age haunted me for days on end. I managed to get through it with the help of my family though. My siblings had to stay home while I was in the hospital but they never left me once. I woke up with Facetime calls from them and went to sleep with a Facetime call and the encouragement of both my mom and grandma. They always checked on me and stayed up late nights to make sure nothing happened to me. They helped me through that experience and I will forever be grateful.

This experience was important to me because I survived. I know this must have heavily weighed on my mom, grandma and siblings because they apologized for days on end and still do to this day. I always reassure them that it wasn't their fault and that it was my decision to

make, I make sure they know that I'm okay and that I wouldn't have made it through such a difficult time and situation if I were there alone. I'm still struggling as I'm still in my late stages of depression and regret of having to put them through something like that. I'm having a hard time accepting the scar on my neck as it is a constant memory and furthermore an insecurity of mine. Even with my depression I never go without trying. I try to get up everyday and keep going, always pushing myself to my limits no matter what, but I know that I'm making them proud. This surgery has had a huge effect on my life but as my mom always says "be proud of that scar, you won the battle."