

I am among the 25% of Classic CAH patients that do NOT have salt-wasting CAH. So, my adrenal crisis typically occurs only after I have had the flu or other illness that prevents me from keeping my medication down. I have been compliant with my corticosteroids my entire life and know when to stress dose. I also insist on speaking personally to the anesthesiologist prior to any surgery (appendectomy, IVFs, etc.) to make sure he or she knows of the need for extra cortisol during surgery.

The surgery to correct my atypical genitalia took place when I was 12. I will not get into the pros, cons, or appropriate age here. In MY OWN CASE, I knew how the reproductive system worked (menses, conception, and delivery) and wanted to be able to do all of it normally. And for those of you with the big “O” question, all of my nerve endings work perfectly!

As it turned out, my CAH did impede my fertility (this was in the 1980’s), so my husband and I adopted two infants in 1989 and 1992. I believe I ended up with the children God wanted me to have. Both are now independent, responsible, compassionate young adults. I love spending time with them as well as with my very active 91-year-old mom.

I have always tried NOT to use CAH as an excuse for avoiding an activity or event. I earned a graduate degree and have been an educator my entire adult life: elementary school teacher, self-employed corporate trainer, and, now, a college instructor.

At age 66, I am beginning to show some side effects of life-long corticosteroid treatment (osteopenia, etc.). Plus, weight control has always been a challenge for me. (I do love to eat.) But I believe with my continued meds, supplements, healthy foods, exercise, friends and family, and a positive attitude, CAH shouldn’t get in the way of a long, happy, and productive life.

THIS IS CAH

Janet Tremblay