

## *Never assume....*

**It seemed only yesterday that I awakened, excited at the prospect of a new day..What could I accomplish? My mind raced toward the possibilities of all the things that could be done.. Time in the workshop? In the craft room making jewelry? The sun looked bright outside my window and I knew... this was going to be a “great day!”**

**But this particular day, I awakened, so incredibly tired. Fatigue gripped every bone and every muscle I owned. Even my mind seemed weary. Had I slept at all? I didn't feel like it. The prospect of even dragging my legs over the side of the bed to sit up seemed daunting. I felt as if I'd been run over by a “proverbial truck” in the middle of the night.**

**What had happened? I thought back to the fall of 2004, when overnight I had forgotten how to walk, how to sleep, how to breathe, how to swallow. It took months then to re-learn how to sleep; two years of gait training, before I could walk more than just a few steps; a BiPap to help me breathe deeply enough that I could get up in the morning without a headache.**

**This time it was different. Not awakening rested, and fatigue and heaviness of limbs; this much was familiar. And yes, I'd done way too much recently; that was obvious. But was it the whole answer?**

**Thinking that it was just a case of “doing too much”, I continued going through the same routine just as I had for the past month; sleeping 15-18 hours every day, having trouble stumbling down the hall; every tiny little chore seemed overwhelming. Even answering a simple e-mail seemed to take hours.**

**I drug myself into the Dr.'s office knowing there would be nothing he could do for me, When he asked me how I'd been feeling, my response was,**

**“I think I'm headed for a PPS crash,” mentioning my long hours of sleeping each day and extreme fatigue.**

**I figured he would say, “Yes, probably so,” and that would be it. But to my surprise, thoughtfully, he said,**

**“It may be that you are right... but I'd like to run some labs on you and make sure there is nothing else going on. I just don't want to miss anything.”**

**Following a stop by the lab and then the trip home, I headed back to bed to complete another 18 hour day of sleeping.**

**The next morning, the phone rang. It was his office, informing me that my B-12 level was low and they needed for me to start weekly shots for a while, then go to monthly. I agreed and hung up.**

**A few moments later it rang again. She had another question. Had I eaten before I came to see him? The Dr. wanted to know. Yes, I said. It had been about two hours between lunch and the time they drew labs.. She would tell him, she said sweetly, and hung up..**

**Fifteen minutes later, she called again. He would like me to come by and pick up a glucometer.. They'd like to see what my blood glucose was doing fasting and 2 hours after eating for several days. It was, after all, 227 on my visit.**

**A week has passed. I now know that in addition to a low B-12 level, I have developed Type II Diabetes. That should have occurred to me, I suppose; Dad was diabetic and had lost both his eyesight and his kidney function, requiring dialysis his last several years. But quite honestly, it had never crossed my mind.**

**It occurred to me that I had fallen into the trap that I have always tried to warn others about.**

***“Never assume everything is the fault of Post Polio Syndrome”.***

**I often wonder if Dr.'s tend to miss things because we have been labled “Polio Survivors.” Like many of us, I've seen caregivers in the past who sort of decided in the first ten seconds that everything was the fault of the PPS, and didn't bother to check to see if there might be something else going on.**

**Things to help keep this from happening?**

- 1) Paying attention to what's happening to us.**
- 2) Writing down things that we notice that are different from a few weeks/days/months ago.**

**Like:**

**Falling more frequently? How many times did we fall in the past year?  
Six months Six weeks?**

**Examine the reason for the fall. Did we trip? Did we lose balance? Did we catch our toes on things because we didn't (or couldn't) lift our feet high enough? ( My biggest reason for falling – I think I've lifted them high enough and I haven't. Or—I have lifted them too high and when they came down I tipped forward.)**

**Were there enough lights on in the room so we could see for certain where we were putting our feet?**

**Are we experiencing more weakness? More difficulty sleeping? Restless legs? Weight loss or gain? Changes in appetite? Fluid retention?**

**Keeping notes on how often these things happen to us and taking those with us when seeing our Physician is a huge help in his/her evaluation.**

**And last but not least:**

**Don't be afraid to change health care providers if they aren't listening. (I know, I know: this is way easier said than done! I changed a couple of times, reluctantly, in the past.)**

**Knowing that PPS affects so much of our lives in so many different ways, and that often things can be traced back to it as the root, it is of utmost importance that we have one who will listen.**

**I also feel quite blessed to have a Physician who is on his toes and willing to “look beyond the obvious” to try to find out what was really going on.**

**Now, I can get to work on treating this thing called diabetes.**

**Watching my diet even more closely than I do now? Checking sugars often to see what causes me to spike? Counting carbs? It seems daunting. But knowing it'll help me feel better and save limbs, kidneys, and eyesight is well worth it. And I can look forward to feeling better, soon!**

**And then, I can work on going back to controlling the Post Polio!**

**I can *do* this!**