

## **The Spurrell Family Part 15: Christina**

Christina has enjoyed good health over the last 10 years. At 45, She exercises regularly at the local gym and attends yoga classes weekly. She and her 32 year old partner, Nick, love the outdoors and hike just about every weekend, with their dog, Maddie. Nick is an excellent cook and they try to eat healthy most days.

Her job as public librarian was not too physically demanding but she was noticing an increase in effort to stack books on shelves and was very tired at the end of the day. This was so unlike her.

Gradually she noticed she needed more sleep and even had to nap during the day at work. At her last Yoga class, she noticed pins and needles in her right hand and this happened again at work after stacking books. She felt her vision went a bit blurry for a few days after a particularly busy day at the library.

After that, she stopped her regular exercise, as she just was too fatigued to get there in the mornings. She barely had energy to walk the dog. She had called in sick to work a few days which has created some tension at work and home, given Nick is still finishing his commercial chef's course at the community college and has not started his work-term yet.

A month or so later, she complains to Nick that her skin was really itchy as of late and wondered if he had changed the laundry detergent. She has always been sensitive to chemicals and fragrances. She was uncomfortable and the itching was keeping both of them awake at night. Nick also noticed the changes in Christina and was worried too. He suggested she go to the doctor for assessment.

Christina told the doctor about her symptoms. She admitted that she was scared that she might be dying or has cancer. The doctor asks Christina about her family and she remembers that she has a cousin with muscular dystrophy and an Aunt with multiple sclerosis. The thought of this frightens Christina.

On examination, Christina is found to have multiple excoriations from her scratching at night on her trunk and legs. Her abdomen was tender to palpation over her liver. The doctor orders some further testing based on these findings and reassures Christina that they will sort out what is happening.