

The Wareham Family Part 8: Dulcie Wareham

Dulcie has not had an easy life. Growing up deaf made it tough for her to communicate and make friends.

She loved to stay home and take care of her family. For the past few years it seemed that things had gone from bad to worse. She is now separated from her husband, living in a basement apartment with her 18-year-old daughter Amy. Since her son Tony's accident a few years ago, she has not felt right. She is tired all the time, having headaches and has gained weight- 30 pounds in fact. She feels Tony's pain of being responsible for the loss of lives.

One month ago, Amy convinced her to start to exercise by walking three times a week. Dulcie was hesitant at first, but thought she would give it a try, as the days were getting longer and it was warm outside. She didn't like to focus on herself. She was more concerned about her family. In fact, she had not seen her family doctor in almost three years. She recalled the last time she saw Dr. Smith. They talked about her health and having regular checkups. Dulcie never went back. She could not communicate with the doctor, as he did not know sign language. She has had some personal things to talk about with the doctor, and while she was walking with Amy, she asked her if she would take her for a checkup. Amy agreed.

Two weeks later, Dulcie had given up on walking- she had to, every time she would try to walk she would have embarrassing leakage of urine. She was sure everyone could smell it.

She did go see the doctor with Amy. It was not easy, but Dulcie told the doctor about her bladder problems. The doctor asked her lots of other questions, too. He said he read on her chart that she had a swelling in her neck that happened after she delivered Tony. Dulcie had forgotten about this. Back then, she was told that her thyroid gland had become "inflamed" after Tony was born. Her thyroid level was down, then up, then okay again. She was told a few years later that she had a goiter. This doctor reminded her she had not had this checked in several years and suggested some tests to see how it was working. He also asked her about her skin and hair. She had always had eczema, but that was as it always was. He also suggested she have a screening mammogram done, as she was over 50 years old.

After getting the tests done, she returned to the Dr. Smith. He looked a little worried. He told her the screening mammogram showed some calcifications and she would need further mammogram x-rays. Also, her thyroid gland was not running well, and she would need to start taking some thyroid medication. She left the doctor's office feeling worried.