Invisible Illness Combo With a Side of Wheelchair

It’s tough having an invisible illness while looking relatively young. That old saying, “Don’t judge a book by its cover” is so true.

January 3, 2022 By Megan-Claire Chase

I don’t look like someone who would have a permanent handicap sign. I don’t look like someone who sometimes needs a cane to walk from the car to the store. I most certainly don’t like someone who needs wheelchair assistance at the airport.

Well, for the first time in my life, I requested wheelchair assistance for my flight to and from NYC last week. I didn’t want to admit that I needed help. I knew I would get looks. I also knew I would possibly not be believed. So, when the older guy came over to the ticket counter with the wheelchair, he completely overlooks me and asks the ticket agent who requested the wheelchair. I had even gestured that it’s me, but he asked the ticket agent again who requested it. He was beyond rude. If it hadn’t been 5am I would’ve immediately complained but didn’t want to expend any of my precious little energy going nuclear on this guy.

All was made better when I arrived at LaGuardia airport and had the nicest woman waiting for me with the wheelchair as soon as I walked; okay, slightly hobbled, off the plane. I had told her about my unpleasant experience at the Atlanta airport and she told me to not worry now because I was in good hands. Not only did she wheel me all the way to baggage claim, but she also wheeled me all the way to the cab and also handed my luggage to the cab driver. Now that was star wheelchair treatment.

While I felt okay enough on the flight back to Atlanta, it was a different story once the plane landed. It was a full flight with not much room to stretch my legs. This time it was a younger guy waiting for me with a wheelchair as I not only hobbled but stumbled off the plane because I was in excruciating pain all over my body. The best way to describe fibromyalgia pain is a radiating burning feeling that is felt from head to toe with a big ‘ole headache as the cherry on top. This young man was fantastic! He was pleasant, energetic, and so thoughtful the entire ride to baggage claim. Then he wheeled me all the way up to the MARTA (name of our Atlanta trains) gate, so all I had to do was get up and walk right through it and up the escalator to the platform. Once again, I received star wheelchair treatment.

Of course, as I was driving home, I wondered if I’ll ever feel safe in this body? Will I ever feel

strong again? Will it ever not hurt to the point of pushing me to tears from frustration, anger, and pain because I have to deal with this bullshit 24/7? I no longer remember what it feels like to not be in excruciating, burning pain.

So, it's time to officially reconsider going the medical marijuana route. My primary's PA actually validated my feelings and has diagnosed me with intractable pain. I'll write more about this diagnosis next time. She referred me to another doctor who specializes in prescribing medical marijuana. I've tried the CBD/THC drops in the past, and they didn't help with my pain at all. Here's hoping I find the right method of medical marijuana that will help minimize the pain and not just make me drowsy.

This life on the cancer train often sucks and wish there was a final destination to be able to rest and recover. A girl can dream, right?

Until next time,

Warrior Megsie

This post originally appeared on Life on the Cancer Train on November 10, 2020. It is republished with permission.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/blog/invisible-illness-combo-side-wheelchair