

GILLIAN LITTLE



I was diagnosed in January of 1994 at the age of 34 with Limited Scleroderma, or CREST syndrome. I exhibit all five of the symptoms of which CREST is an acronym, but they did not all appear at the same time.

My Scleroderma journey probably started six months before my diagnosis, but all the symptoms I was experiencing at that time I could attribute to being pregnant; tired all the time, acid reflux, swollen joints. Once my baby was born I presumed that the acid reflux and swollen joints would go away (I had no delusions about not being tired). The symptoms did not go away and I started to get hard little callus like deposits on my fingers (calcinosis). I went to my GP; it was thought at first that I might have Lupus, but the tests came back negative for Lupus, positive for Scleroderma. I was told to go home, relax and get lots of sleep....right, like that's going to happen with an active two year old and a new born baby!!

- I grew up in London, England and have always had cold hands and feet, so I thought nothing of the Raynaud's Phenomenon that I experienced,
- I worked as a dental hygienist right up to the date of my child's birth, so in my opinion, I maintained the range of motion in my hands during the critical first six months of the disease and kept the Sclerodactyly somewhat at bay
- Because I wanted to breast feed my child, I chose not to take any form of prescription medication, and to this day the only "Scleroderma" medication I take is for the acid reflux due to the Esophageal Dysmotility
- In 1996 I developed a heart condition (Arrhythmias and Tachycardia) after surviving a Myocarditis, which may or may not be connected with my Scleroderma, and for which I do take heart medication
- I became involved with a Scleroderma support group in 1997, when we moved to Edmonton
- Twenty years later, and I'm still going through the motions. I am involved with Scleroderma Canada as a Provincial Representative and attend the AGMs and National conferences
- Conferences are an excellent way to meet others with Scleroderma, learn more about the disease and hear about the research being done to aid symptoms and find a cure

[National Scleroderma Conference is to be held in Calgary Alberta, on September 20-22, 2018](#)

I hope you will take the opportunity to attend this conference; if you have any suggestions for topics to be included, now is the time to voice them.

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