

Mija's World Famous Colitis Story

OK here is it! The story thousands of you Mijas were waiting for, (cue the big dramatic music) THE COLITIS STORY!! Yes, I said it Colitis. What is it? Well I will tell you later, you know I have to start the intro, then it will go to rising action, then the colitis will pop up during the climax, and so on and so forth.



Let me take you back to summer 2005. Your girl right here was happy. I was a dynamic kick-butt front desk clerk at a well-known hotel. Everything was going great for a few months. I was taking care of my grandma, working on getting Mija's 6th issue off the ground, still djing on the side, writing articles for other publications and on top of all that working full-time.

Towards the end of August, I saw that my ankles were getting a little puffy - I didn't think anything of it, so I kept on working. A few weeks later my joints started aching real bad, I started to limp, but that didn't stop me from working. As time went by, everyone noticed that I was getting slimmer and my face was getting pale. I had the most white-colored friend come up to me and say, "Girl, I look more Puerto Rican than you?!"

It started getting worse as September approached. Going up stairs was difficult, I would have to sit on a chair while working the front desk, I was eating one meal a day and it consisted of romaine lettuce and chicken; sometimes I just didn't feel like eating at all.

I got tired of all this pain and called my father. He gave me some anti-inflammatory medicine. The first 2 tablets were good, and then I ended up throwing them up. I hate throwing up when I don't know the cause; usually when I throw up it's when I partied just a little too hard. So I went to emergency feeling high as a kite. The doctor checked my joints and told me I had dependent edema. (Cue the definition) DEPENDENT EDEMA - when water in the body is collecting at the lowest point - usually due to gravity - it is being pulled to that location.

So Mijas you see, the doctor said that I am experiencing this pain due to the fact that I stand on my feet 8 hours a day. He didn't prescribe me medicine or anything like that. He just told me to go to the pharmacy and buy \$40.00 Ted Stockings...these stockings are real tight and are supposed to help with your leg circulation. I was walking around at work doing the robot with these things on!!

Let's speed it up now.

I started to throw up some "orange-esque" colored fluid every morning. A friend of mine told me it was my stomach lining!! I finally go to a doctor because my medical insurance just kicked in. She put me on the scale and I was 158 pounds! "158 POUNDS?!" I screamed. I haven't been at that weight since I was in 5th grade! She saw it as bad news I saw it as breakthrough. The doctor sent me to get blood work then visit her the next week.

I go back to Dr. Ranes, she tells me, "Roberta your blood is low, you are anemic and I want you to go see a rheumatologist for your legs." So I go see the rheumatologist and he said that my joints were inflamed, he prescribes me prednisone - a steroid. I take the steroids they start working, I'm feeling good things are looking up - until I run out of medicine...then the pain comes back. I am back to the same limp, the same pimp walk. I go back to Dr. Ranes after getting more blood work done. She is puzzled. I am losing blood somehow? I am not cut anywhere, no surgeries, not my time of the month, there is only one other place to check. Then Dr. Ranes says, "I am going to check your rectum Roberta." "WHAT?! Uh no doctor, it hurts sometimes coming out. I definitely do not want your finger in there!!" Dr. Ranes - "Come Roberta, we gotta find out." Me - "Fine, my butt isn't the prettiest butt though." Ay Mijas she put the gloves on and went uptown. At that time I dreamt of green clovers and golden tostones then she finished. She found blood in my rectum. At that point she referred me to a "butt doctor". She needed to refer me to rape crisis because I felt violated. AY!

I set up an appointment with the "butt doctor", but I got worse before I even made it. It got to the point that I couldn't walk. I used to dread using the bathroom because it would take me minutes to get the courage to get up to bear the pain. I fainted in the shower; I threw up every time I used the bathroom, my knee was swollen. My eyes were charcoal black; my friends said I looked like I stepped out of the set of Michael Jackson's "Thriller" video. I ended up calling my dad and I went to emergency at 2:30a.m. I got there and weighed in at 145 pounds! I stayed in emergency the whole night. The nurses gave me morphine, extracted a syringe and a half of fluid from my knee, a potassium shot and an I.V. I was admitted.

I had two bed pans, one for the usual reason and the other to throw up after. The "butt doctor" showed up and told me that I had Ulcerative Colitis!!! AHFFF!! (Cue the definition!!!) ULCERATIVE COLITIS - is an acute or chronic inflammation of the membrane lining the colon—your large intestine or bowel. Ulcerative colitis is not caused by emotional distress or sensitivity to certain foods or food products, but these factors may trigger symptoms in some people. And STRESS was a factor that triggered my symptom.

"Stress?!" I said to the doctor. "I love everything I do! How can that stress me out?" The doctor says, "See, you are getting stressed out now!" "Oh snap! He got me there." I thought in my mind as I was given 2 units of blood!! Yes, Mijas

my blood was soo low that they needed to give me someone else's blood. How did it feel? It felt weird going in, it looked weird watching it go inside me. I mean come on it's not my blood!!

I didn't know how strong stress is. The doctor even said the littlest things stress you out such as meeting a deadline and thinking about what you will do throughout the day. It gets worse if you feel as if you will not accomplish your daily plans. Something as small as thinking, "Oh I have to be at work by 10a.m." contains even a little stress. I was demanding a laptop computer with wireless internet access while I was in the hospital just so I can check my Mija mail. They didn't give it to me of course. The doctors ordered me to not check any email or think about working at my job or Mija Magazine. Anyone that needed advice from me had to wait until I got better.

Days after my release, I felt the same pain coming back again. How could this happen?? I was on 8 different medications that were strong. My hair thinned and I lost a lot of it! I ended up saying forget all this, I went to the herbal store and found a remedy and colitis hasn't came back since.

What I've learned is you can have all this power; running things and being queen of all that is around you, but if you don't take time for yourself and look at all the chaos that surrounds you; stress may end up sneaking up on you.

In Mija's next issue, I will tell the world on how I planned my comeback and what I have learned. I think a lot of you Mijas will benefit....oh and by the way I weigh 175 now...darn those golden tostones.