



The Ménière's Years

Part 2

The Challenge of Other Life Events

By

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Ménière's patients do not live in a 'life bubble.' In other words, Ménière's is not the only physical, mental, emotional, or medical challenge in our lives. I know Ménière's patients who also suffer from cancer, diabetes, pancreatitis, allergies, heart problems, breathing problems, and a cascade of other diseases and maladies that are far more common.

For example — Ménière's patients are only about 0.2% of the American population, while diabetes patients are almost 12% of the population. 38% are pre-diabetic. The same is true of heart diseases, lung diseases, cancer, etc.

The Impact

Why do I bring that up? Because of the impact these other health conditions can have on us. People with Ménière's disease may be receiving treatments for other illnesses at the same time. How do treatments for other diseases affect our treatments for Ménière's?

I know this is true from extensive research and personal experience. Many people in my family have or had (prior to their death) Ménière's. They were also dealing with a host of other health problems and had to learn how to juggle various treatments, medications, surgeries, etc. to try to deal the best they could with each one.

We don't live in a 'Ménière's bubble' where that's all we have to treat. It would be great if life was that simple, but it's not. So, what are we going to do with that information?

Become Pro-Active

Becoming 'pro-active' means accepting the fact that we may be dealing with multiple health problems in addition to having Ménière's. I recommend that you let all of your doctors know you have Ménière's. Ask them what they know about the disease. You may be surprised at how little some medical professionals know about Ménière's. One specialist and surgeon who has treated thousands of Ménière's patients recently told me this — “The one thing we know about Ménière's is that we don't know anything about Ménière's.” I found that both interesting and insightful. If an expert in treating Ménière's patients admits that even the best-informed and trained 'inner-ear' doctors know little about the disease, you can be pretty sure that other doctors probably know less.

It's important that doctors in other medical specialities know how Ménière's might affect you. They probably know a lot about their particular speciality, but do they know how the treatments they prescribe for you might impact your illness? I suggest you find out. If they don't know or have little information about Ménière's, you have some options. One is to ask your non-Ménière's doctors to learn more about the disease and consider that as they prescribe treatment for other conditions you have. Another option is to do your own research to make sure a treatment prescribed for one disease doesn't cause problems for your Ménière's.

I believe we are often our best health advocate. You may be fortunate enough to have family members or friends who look out for your best 'health' interests, and that's great. However, take control of your own health and make sure that all of your health providers are aware of your Ménière's Disease.

Also, give non-Ménière's medical professionals feedback about how their treatments are affecting your illness. Doctors promise to 'do no harm,' so they shouldn't be offended if you tell them a treatment they recommended for you may be causing you harm.

Think of all of your doctors as part of 'your' medical team — a team that you manage. Everyone on your 'team' needs to know what you know. They also need to know what other members of the 'team' are doing for you. Together, you can receive the best 'treatments' possible.

We'll look at the many challenges of 'Tinnitus' in the next Managing Ménière's Disease newsletter.

“... rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer.” Romans 12:12

Here's to hope!