

FACES OF AMR PROFILE STORIES



Jillian Thibault

“Antibiotic resistance has almost taken my life numerous times. It’s imperative that people gain a better understanding of how they too could be impacted and that there’s more information and research because antibiotic resistance does not discriminate.”

Jillian Thibault is no stranger to hospitals or getting support from an extensive medical team. More than 10 years ago, she was diagnosed with gastroparesis and dysmotility, conditions that affect the muscles of the stomach and digestive system. Several years into the diagnosis, Jillian had to start receiving nutrition through a feeding tube. That lasted until her body was no longer able to tolerate the tubes. Today, her nutrition is administered through a Total Parenteral Nutrition – or TPN – central line.

Research shows that patients with TPN central lines usually experience a higher risk of infection at the point of entry. That has been Jillian’s experience. She’s been hospitalized about 15 times due to infections or sepsis, a life-threatening complication from an infection. Further, her feeding mechanisms make her more vulnerable to other infections like respiratory infections or the flu.

As a result of the frequency of her infections and the subsequent sepsis diagnoses, Jillian has developed a resistance to certain antibiotics. Typically, she is put on a broad-spectrum antibiotic as soon as she gets to the hospital. One time, however, the antibiotics didn’t work. She went into septic shock and was moved to the ICU. Her blood pressure was extremely low, heart rate was high and so was her temperature.

Today, Jillian’s medical team is aware of this resistance and works to identify other options that will work to address infections or sepsis each time she comes to the hospital. It has become even more critical that Jillian have available a treatment that works because she has lost almost all access points for her TPN central line. There is no end in sight to Jillian’s reliance on antibiotics to help manage infection, even to simply sustain her nutrition needs to stay alive.

Despite it all, these ongoing challenges haven’t slowed her down. In fact, the opposite is true. Jillian is a vocal and active advocate for people who have suffered from sepsis or other life-threatening infections. She regularly tells her story and views her advocacy as an opportunity to give back and educate others to help prevent them from similar life-threatening complications.

Jillian urges people to understand that sepsis and infections – along with developing a resistance to antibiotics – can happen to anyone. She advocates for broader communication so that people don’t have to suffer alone, and more information and research so that people like her have more options to help treat persistent infections.

