

From the ages of 19 to 40, I suffered from bouts of reoccurring acute pancreatitis. On average, I would have one a year, and developed anxiety about when the next one would hit. At the beginning, the doctors couldn't find a cause and basically thought I was an alcoholic even though I never drank. In my late 20's I had my gall bladder removed, then learned some first and second cousins had pancreatitis, and I lost an aunt and an uncle to pancreatic cancer. I was finally tested for hereditary pancreatitis and the results came back positive.

After my 40th birthday, my pain turned chronic. Anything and everything I ate gave me unrelenting upper abdominal and back pain. I was on opioid pain medications for two years which helped somewhat but my pain level was still 5-7 on a scale of 0-10. I tried a nerve block, a stent, a sphincterotomy, and even acupuncture, but nothing really helped.

The TP-IAT surgery was a miracle for me! I was completely off pain meds and back at work 2 months post-surgery. I had some phantom pain for a few more months that eventually diminished to nothing. I am a mild, easily-controlled diabetic and only take tiny amounts of short-acting insulin with meals. I would trade the pain for diabetes again in a heartbeat. I feel like I have a normal life again!