



LIPEDEMA LADY KIMBERLY MONTGOMERY

Transcript of Lipedema Lady Video Episode 11



KIMBERLY MONTGOMERY

Encountering Anti-Fat Bias in Healthcare Providers

My name is Kimberly Montgomery. I am from Peru, Indiana, and I'm forty-three years old.

I've known since I was a kid that something was wrong. When I was about twelve, maybe not even quite twelve, I started noticing my cheerleading skirt. I'm looking at my legs, looking at the other girls' legs going, "This is not right. Something looks different here." And it wasn't just that they're chunkier, but they just looked different. I was already beginning at twelve to get cellulite. About that same time it seemed like I had dark circles under my eyes. I feel like maybe I was beginning to have some drainage issues or something. Those things came at twelve, and I was very self-conscious. It was one of those things where I absolutely knew something wasn't going right, and of course, when you're twelve, you start to diet.

I was already very active. I was not heavy. I had chunky legs and cellulite, but I wasn't heavy throughout all high school. I was relatively average size. I did diet like every other teenage girl, but it was more standard dieting – you try this, you try that.

I was valedictorian in my high school, and I was a smart girl. And I went four years of college without ever raising my hand because I would have died to have everybody turn and look at me in the classroom.

My weight would go steady for a little while, and then some unknown thing, up five pounds. Then steady for a little while, and then up. It was like climbing a staircase. And it was an out-of-control, terrible, scary feeling, because you knew you were doing everything. If you were eating nothing and you could gain weight, you knew something was going on.

My real trouble started then when I had pregnancies. I really struggled at that time. My first pregnancy, big change in legs. I thought to myself, "I can't believe the difference in my legs before and after pregnancy." I had one pregnancy at twenty, and then a second at twenty-five, and in that five year period, I lost none of that. I did a lot of stuff to try to lose weight and could not lose any of the weight I gained from the first pregnancy.

After the second pregnancy, I did discover low-carb, and that helped a lot. I also discovered just absolute starvation. I spent the next five years starving myself, eating nothing, maybe having an iced tea a couple times a day. I was drinking and that was it. Or having just one salad a day, and that wasn't even every day.

Then after my third pregnancy, that's when things kind of exploded. At that point, it didn't matter that I was starving myself. My weight would go steady for a little while, and then some unknown thing, up five pounds. Then steady for a little while, and then up. It was like climbing a staircase. And it was an out-of-control, terrible, scary feeling, because you knew you were doing everything. If you were eating nothing and you could gain weight, you knew something was going on.

So that's when I began to internet research all the time. I tried every supplement, everything I could think of to try to lose weight, and really was having no luck. It was a very scary, helpless feeling, to know you are doing everything. And no one believes you, other than just your immediate family who's watching you starve yourself. No one believes you.

I can remember my first time, I was still relatively thin then, but I was watching this cascade [of] upward-bound weight. I went and talked to my family doctor at that time and I said, "Look, I tried a five-day fast, nothing, water, five days. I lost no weight and then the minute I ate again, a salad, five pounds up again." I told him that and he looked at me and said, "You know how I know that's not true?" I said, "How?" And he said, "Because there are no fat people in refugee camps." That was what he said. So I knew then, he does not believe me. There's nothing this doctor can do to help me. So you continue to starve yourself and gain weight. That was one of my experiences.

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Then after I got a diagnosis, this last year I went to see an allergy specialist, thinking okay, I'll check for food allergies and see what's going on there. And I told him I have lipedema, and he said he'd never even heard of it, so he popped it up on the Internet, Wikipedia of all things, and he said, "Well, that's not a real disease. That's just a new trendy disease that fat women have made up so they have an excuse." That was what he told me.

It's just so disappointing when you walk away and you feel very alone. Nobody is going to help you at all. Nobody believes you. And you feel embarrassed and just humiliated.

Researching Lipedema

When you don't have a doctor helping you, then you start trying to realize you're going to be the boss of this. You're going to have to try to own it. I started actively researching every night. I have spent so many hours trying to find out what's wrong with me, and I would find little pieces of the puzzle. I figured out somewhere along the line, way before I knew about lipedema, compression was going to be something I needed. I just hadn't gotten the right compression because I hadn't gotten with the right doctor.

So I was searching the Internet one day, and I saw three pictures of legs, and the middle one looked like my legs. "Oh my goodness, that looks like my legs." I clicked on it, and it was a website telling me about lipedema. I read and I read for the next week. That's all I did, was read and study, and try to figure out what I might do to help myself. And I got to thinking the best thing I could do was get a diagnosis; I needed to know for sure.

I flew to Tucson and met with Karen Herbst and did get my diagnosis. I got some recommendations on supplements and found out I needed a certain type of compression tights, and those things have helped me a lot. And that was my beginning of my journey, even though I surely knew there was something wrong since I was twelve. So twenty years, it took me twenty years to get a diagnosis.

“ **At this point I’m just very hopeful, because having a name and knowing exactly what’s wrong means that I’m at least a part of the way toward finding some kind of a cure and solution.** ”

I wanted to do everything I could, because some of the pictures of people who get really advanced lipedema are scary. I don’t want that to be me in ten or twenty years, so I want to do everything I can to try to help myself now while I still have the best chance of having a good outcome. I’m an active person, I work, I want to continue to do those things. When I’m reading about it, some of the reading is a little negative. You feel like there is no solution and we need to find solutions. So for me, I was concerned about what would happen to my mobility later if I don’t do something now? Will I still be able to walk? Will I get knee pain to where I would have so much pain I couldn’t walk?

At this point I’m just very hopeful, because having a name and knowing exactly what’s wrong means that I’m at least a part of the way toward finding some kind of a cure and solution. You get one chance at life, and I’m so tired of having this affect me. I would love to be in a place where it’s not every day a part of my life. It’s not the first thing I think about when I get up in the morning. It’s not going to affect every decision I make. It’s not going to hold me back at work because I don’t want to go for promotions, because then I’ll have to talk in front of people. I have spent my entire life hiding behind other people in pictures, and trying to blend in so nobody sees me.

I have actually felt better since I had a name to put on it. At some point, I think I’ve forgiven myself just a little bit for everything I never did wrong in the first place. Thank you. Thank you for giving me a name for it.

About Kimberly Montgomery

Kimberly Montgomery is an analyst for an electric company in Indiana. She has Stage 2 lipedema and has had two successful lymph sparing liposuction surgeries in 2015. She follows a low-carb, anti-inflammation diet and feels hopeful that continued healing is possible.

AMA citation

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<http://DiseaseTheyCallFAT.tv/shop/lipedema/diagnosis/fat-bias/kimberly-montgomery>
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