

Tears Aren't Always Bad News

Category: Awaiting a Diagnosis

written by Patti Cassidy | August 30, 2025

I have chest pain again. Chest pain and dizziness and shortness of breath. So I am in the ER for the dozenth time over the past few years.

And because no one ever knows what's going on (because I'm a woman of a certain age and all the tests are negative), we all assume it's just one of those things. It will go away. Or it won't.

"But don't hesitate to come in when you have the symptoms again."

Over the years I've tried to cope by taking care of the symptoms as best I can. Most often by taking a deep nap and a cup of herbal tea, then going for a walk. I check out Dr. Google and all his internet clones. I have my favorites. Some reassure me and others scare me half to death.

Is it cardiac? Respiratory? Perhaps only GERD?

For the past two days, I've felt like I was going to keel over. After the EKG and other initial tests, I settle in to my hallway stretcher. I doze on and off over the hours.

But this time things are different.

A team of doctors huddles at the end of the stretcher and schedules a cardiac cath ASAP. Things aren't adding up to them.

This time they see the problem clearly. Clogged arteries all over the heart. They review treatment options with me, and we choose bypass surgery for three days hence.

I cry.

Tears of joy. At last! Someone knows what's wrong.

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