

# No Chill Pill?

Category: Fatigue

written by Julie A. Dickson | May 19, 2022

They have pills for everything it seems, but not a chill pill.

When I was young, I would often look up to see my mother's concerned face outlined in the kitchen window, knocking, beckoning me into the house. "Quickly," she'd say, leading me to the sink where she immersed my wrists into cold water, while draping a wet hand towel over the back of my neck. This was a normal occurrence for me: getting overheated, face red, white around my lips. "Sit in front of the fan," my mother would say, as the headache started.

"Heat exhaustion," my pediatrician told her several times. "Keep her from too much exertion in hot weather; get her into a cool place." I grew tired of this routine, sitting inside while friends played in the summer heat.

Fast forward to adulthood. I dreaded summer when temperatures rose above seventy-five degrees. I couldn't weed the flower beds or take brisk walks. I couldn't even just be outdoors on a ninety-degree day. Again, I'd get the bright red face, white around my lips. I longed to be the type of person who got cold, instead of one who had to sit out the summer activities.

I have been diagnosed with two chronic conditions: Hypertrophic Obstructive Cardiomyopathy (HOCM) and hypohidrosis. HOCM is a disease in which the heart muscle thickens and is unable to pump normal amounts of blood. Hypohidrosis is a condition in which the sweat glands fail to function properly, so the body overheats in warm temperatures.

I'd been told of my heart murmur for years, but until recently had never experienced the fatigue and lack of stamina that I now knew. Since reaching the age of sixty, I've felt myself slowing down, and my intolerance for summer heat or warm indoor temperatures has increased.

I sit out many activities, as I've always done. I take a beta blocker and take it easy, staying out of the sun, declining fairs, car shows and ball games during days over eighty degrees. I still don't understand, with all the pharmacological miracles of modern day, why there isn't a chill pill to cool me off!

*Julie A. Dickson*

*Exeter, New Hampshire*