

I was first diagnosed with mild asthma at age 8. It wasn't until I was a teenager that I required a daily steroid inhaler to keep my asthma controlled. As I got older and by the time I was 25 I received the "severe asthma" diagnosis and by 30 I was in the "severe persistent asthma" category. I was taking countless asthma medications including daily prednisone and my asthma still wasn't controlled. I was needing my rescue inhaler several times a day and ended up in the ER/admitted often. I am also a Respiratory Therapist and as you'd imagine it was incredibly frustrating not being able to get my asthma under control with all of my knowledge about the lungs. When I was 32 one of my good friends (who is also my allergy/asthma doc) called me from a conference he was attending in Texas to tell me that he was learning more about Bronchial Thermoplasty (BT) and he thought it was something I should look into. He told me he felt I would really benefit from these procedures since we had literally tried everything else we could and I was maxed out on medications. I found out that my pulmonologist (Dr. Bagheri) had recently been trained on the procedures and I made an appointment. He agreed that I was a perfect candidate for the procedures and thankfully my insurance agreed to cover them. A lot of people asked me if I was nervous to be Dr. Bagheri's first BT patient & my response was always a resounding "no." I trusted him 100% and knew the risks that come with any procedure.

I had all 3 procedures done in the summer of 2015. Once I was completely healed from the procedures, I was in absolute awe of how much better I felt. BT isn't a cure by any means, but it has made my asthma dramatically better. Before BT I was taking 7 daily asthma medications, including being prednisone dependent. It was rare that I was able to be completely off of it. Since BT I have been off daily prednisone and have only needed it a few times for short bursts in the past almost 2 years. I'm down to only 3 daily asthma medications and rarely need to use my xopenex rescue inhaler (when before BT I was needing it several times a day). I haven't had a single asthma related ER visit or hospitalization since I had BT. I am able to run after my children and play soccer with them at the park, & I have been working out on a daily basis. I was able to compete in the American Lung Association's Fight for Air Climb in the spring of 2016 and finished with

an impressive time. My triggers have changed over time as well since BT and aren't as severe as they used to be. The most incredible difference I've seen in my lungs post BT has been the improvement in my lung function. Before BT my lungs were in an essentially fixed state with literally zero improvement post bronchodilator on my PFT's from all of the airway remodeling due to decades of severe uncontrolled asthma. Since BT, my FEV1 has increased significantly and for the first time in my life, shows reversibility after bronchodilator. My lungs now behave more like a "typical asthmatic" which to me is amazing because before BT I was definitely an oddball. Bronchial thermoplasty has been an absolute game changer for me. Before I had the procedures I was told by my doctor that my lungs were so bad that there was a good chance I would be dead within 10 years. Not anymore! I am living and absolutely thriving! I am beyond grateful to have had the opportunity to give myself a second chance at life!