Glimpse into 2012

This year has been a haze of doctors, dieticians, sick leave, and hours of couch time. Last year, my energy levels had started to falter. I would exercise a couple of times in a week, and then be sick for weeks. By the start of this year, I would get fatigued for days on end for no apparent reason.
Dizziness and light headedness, which has always been an issue for me, became frequent and interfering. Brain fog became a way of life, along with memory and concentration problems, irritability, sadness, heart palpitations, and aches and pains.
As I got a handle on my strict diet, my stomach issues improved greatly though. Going from having gastro issues daily, I have managed to get to a stage where I usually only get major problems once or twice a month. Even though this means a very restricted diet, it is great to get an improvement in something that has become increasingly worse over the past ten years.

In the last week of October, I was diagnosed with Hashitmoto's disease. It has been an amazing relief that finally, after years of countless tests, thousands of dollars spent, doctor after doctor (and doctor after doctor throwing their arms up in confusion and giving up!), there has been a discovery to not only enable a possible recovery, but also to say "I am not crazy! I am not making it up!!"

The past two months since the diagnosis have not been good. I was started on 75mcg of Oroxine. After a week, I felt ok. I was optimistic that this was going to be an easy fix; that after all this time, I was going to be able to take one tablet a day and be feeling great in no time! It was not to be. By the second week of taking Oroxine, I started feeling lethargic and dizzy. It was not much different from what I am used to, so thought it was because I was on a low dose of Oroxine, and

it would take a while for the effects to kick in anyway. By the end of the second week, I started to realise that the symptoms were becoming much more intense than what I usually have. During the third week, I had blood tests done, and I had become hyperthyroid. The dose of Oroxine, which was already meant to be a low dose to ease me into it, was decreased to 50 mcgs after two days of no medication. My symptoms improved but I was still feeling bad. More blood tests revealed I was still hyperthyroid. I was taken off Oroxine and commenced on Carbimazole to stop my own thyroid hormone production to try to bring down my levels faster. After a few days of taking this, I ended up in the emergency room with chest pain and severe light headedness. More blood tests showed my levels were improving so I stayed on this medication for a week.

Within 24 hours of stopping the medication, I started feeling severely lethargic, dizzy, shaky, had a very upset stomach and a racing heart.
On the fourth day of no Carbimazole, which was yesterday, I got in touch with my doctor, and although he was at home with a migraine, he met me at his surgery and after another blood test (just call me the human pin cushion), it was discovered that my thyroid hormone levels are on the increase again, and my antibodies, which is what proves I have Hashimoto’s have increased. When I was first diagnosed, my antibodies were 2000 (the normal range is less than 60!). Yesterday, my level had increased to 2700, which indicates that my body is under a Hashimoto’s attack, as luck would have it, just as I came off the Carbimazole! So, I am back on Carbimazole, and in bed with pain relief and an endless supply of audiobooks, music and tv shows, and help from my loving family. To say this is disappointing just hours before Christmas begins is an understatement; all that baking I had been looking forward to and hanging out with my visiting brother have been squashed. However, I have to keep optimistic. When I can get my levels back to normal, I can try again to start Oroxine, which will

eventually stop my own thyroid producing hormone, so that when I am under these Hashimoto's attacks, my thyroid won't overproduce. My one Christmas wish is that this will happen. It is not guaranteed, and as my body has shown, it is not going to make this process easy! I just hope I can get there on the next try, and that it will then improve my symptoms that I have dealt with for so long.

Although this year has been filled with struggling with feeling sick, with trying to make it through work, with trying to find a solution, there has been some good times too. Dan and I moved into a fabulous new apartment. I am so proud of Dan for having worked so hard and being able to buy his first property. We moved in on July 4th, our 4th anniversary. The past few months have been filled with getting the apartment set up, which has included numerous faults in the building to be fixed, but we are nearly there, and are starting to enjoy the place.
Also, when Dan came home for a break to move into the new apartment, he surprised me with the news that he was moving back to Brisbane! It has been an experience getting used to living with each other full time again, but it is great to have him around. A boyfriend in the same city! How novel.
This year has also shown me who my real friends are. Sadly, I have lost quite a few friends because being sick is not a great selling point for friendships. But it means that the people I have left in my life are the genuine relationships that I can rely on and trust. My family have been amazing as well. I have always been close to Mum and Dad, but over the past year, I feel like we have gone up a level in respect, love and trust.

This year is nearly over, and as I struggle to feel well enough to enjoy Christmas, I vow to make next year the year of overcoming my health issues. For the year 2011, I had planned to find out what was wrong with my body, which I partly achieved. For the year 2012, I planned to get on top of my

issues and improve my health. This hasn’t happened, although my diet has greatly improved things. However, I appear to have now made good on the plan for 2011, and so, in 2013, I want to take the knowledge that I have severe food intolerances with the subsequent gut damage and cortisol issues, and the discovery of Hashimoto’s disease, and take any opportunity to improve. I will continue to research all avenues, learn as much as I can, eat as healthily as I can, think positively and take all advice I am given. In 2013, I WILL get healthy :-).