

# Cat Fish's Story

**Cat was 48, perimenopausal and had low iron levels when she was referred for a Mirena hormone-releasing IUD. The IUD caused serious side-effects and when it was removed she suffered extreme menstrual bleeding. At 50 she had a Novasure endometrial ablation leaving her with debilitating pain, devastating her health and her life.**

I was referred to the Greenlane Gynaecology Clinic for low iron at the age 48. My periods were starting to get irregular, and I had low iron levels. At that time I was going to the gym for a hour, mowing the lawns, travelling, having a normal life with my kids.

Going to Greenlane was the worst mistake of my life; I was coerced into having a Mirena hormone-releasing IUD inserted. I had never been on birth control pills in my life but the IUD was toxic overload and affected me mentally and physically making me terribly sick. When I saw the doctor about the side-effects of the IUD I was ignored or belittled. It was hell on Earth and I had to beg to get it removed.

Once removed I nearly bled to death; it was like a dripping tap and I haemorrhaged for two months. The doctors wanted to insert another IUD to stop the bleeding. I said "No way!"

I then went to Auckland Gynaecology Group thinking that private care would be superior; how wrong I was.

I was subjected to a sales pitch for Hologic's Nova-Sure endometrial ablation; it was sold to me as a harmless easy procedure. I was provided with insufficient information to provide informed consent, and they didn't investigate or test my iron levels despite knowing that I had been bleeding for two months solid. They also didn't do any hormone tests (I was only a year away from menopause), pelvic exam or any scan of my uterus. They didn't know that I had fibroids, cysts, and cuts to my womb from the IUD being torn out.

They did do an endometrial biopsy, but I have never received the results. I was never told of any of the consequences of endometrial ablation, the risks and the possibility of failure of the procedure. I was not told about post ablation syndrome or any of the other risks, such as not being able to detect uterine cancer, or that it can cause sudden menopausal symptoms because of the burning of the uterus and the shock.

I was told could rush me in before I went on a planned holiday. I never met the gynaecologist who performed the procedure beforehand. He rang me at 6.30pm one the evening and did a five-to-seven minute consultation that he didn't even bother to write up in my medical notes. That counted as informed consent! Afterwards he said just three words to me: IT WENT WELL. But it didn't!

Straight away something was wrong. That night I woke up with intense night sweats and my hands

and feet were tingling. I thought to myself "What has that [expletive deleted] done to me." It felt like all the nerves in my body had been given an electric shock. Later I had lower abdominal pain that has never gone away.

I was on holiday in Sydney and had no strength in my arms or legs. I went to A&E there and had an ultrasound. I had never had period pain and had had two natural births with no pain relief, but the pain I was left in was ten times worse than childbirth.

When I got back to New Zealand I could not email AGG as they had blocked me. I didn't even have a post-op check-up. When I had my consultation with the gynaecologist, I asked him why he didn't tell me about Post Ablation Syndrome, or uterine cancer issues or organ damage. He looked down at his desk. He stabbed at my painful abdomen and showed no concern and shuffled his papers on his desk without a hint of guilt. I asked for a ultrasound but I never got the results. I was offered free consultation with his colleague, but he was even more chauvinistic and demoralising, and gave me a breast exam even though I was complaining of pelvic pain.

Now I live in agony or on pain tablets that do little. Horrific, electric shock-like pain to my whole body, muscles, nerves, organs. I could go to hospital every day with the pain.... but they gaslight me, belittle me and laugh at me.

My nerves have been damaged, I was burnt so badly my ovaries stopped working putting me into sudden menopause. I suffer from chronic inflammation, bowel and bladder urgency; I am literally house-bound. I can't sit without absolute agony, I can't walk without pain, I can't sleep. I can't work because I can't function now – I used to be an architect earning a six-figure income; I worked hard and was good at my job. I can't have sex with my husband, my vagina burns, and I suffer incredible pain in my inner groin and legs.

I was always fit and healthy, but I can no longer move. I've gone from a size 12 to size 20. I have aged twenty years in the last four. I am a cripple because of this barbaric procedure. It has catastrophically changed my relationships with my husband and my children; no children should have to see such agony inflicted on their mother. I was fit, healthy, bubbly. I had a nice life; travelling, friends and family, a normal existence. Now I have none of that.