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So Many Hats: A Mother's Story (pt3)

We are deeply appreciative to present the next story from a dedicated mother within our community. This marks her third contribution, where she candidly shares the everyday experiences of caring for a young child with CF. Although she wishes to remain anonymous, her heartfelt words aim to offer solace and camaraderie to others on a similar path, assuring parents and carers that they are not alone in their journey and that each person is making remarkable strides in their own way.

So many hats!

One hat, two hats, three hats, more!

No, it's not a Dr. Seuss title, but rather the many hats a parent wears throughout the day.

Chef, chauffeur, referee...the list goes on and on.

Now add CF to the mix and you've got yourself a great balancing act.

Ta-da!

From the moment we get up, our little routine begins.

Amongst the packing of school bags and getting into uniforms, our CF routine sneaks in.

Medical hat on.

Chest physio with a few Bluey episodes to keep track of time, counting of Creon (pancreatic enzymes) with breakfast, vitamins, salts, other medications, washing, sterilising equipment and finally getting on with the day.

Before having my youngest I didn't think twice about the germs that surrounded us.

Never once did I worry about an old leaf in their hand or a cough or sneeze a few rows down at the shopping center.

But now my CF radar is on high alert.

Detective hat on.

Where did that cough come from? How much fat is in that snack? What did he just pick up? Quick get the sanitiser out.

Now, to many people, this may look like the traits of a manic germaphobe. But to a CF parent, avoiding bacteria from viruses and the environment is very important. However, there is also that fine line of letting our little ones live, learn, and play. At times, this is a bit of a juggling act, balancing risk against letting go. ***Professional juggler hat on.***

During my school years, I had one subject that I couldn't wait to say goodbye to - Maths. The last day of school approached and I was so thrilled to say "See you later" to the lessons of fractions, measurements, or tedious equations.

Ah, what a relief.

Until the Creon count began.

Mathematics hat on.

During our mealtimes at home all our Creon doses are calculated and ready before the meal begins. Without a second thought at how accurate it may be. Then there are the days we head out. A trip to the café for a little babycino and muffin. My mind quickly scrambles as I scan the menu calculating Creon dosage. It's become a very normal part of our day but for a new parent, these tiny doses can be quite daunting. It does get better.

Having CF not only means keeping away from colds, germs, and nasty bugs but also ensuring you have a nutritious, high-calorie healthy diet.

Due to the pancreas being blocked from sticky mucus, it is very important to not only keep on top of enzyme dosage but also monitor how much good fats and nutrients are in each meal. And on hot days, an extra salty snack is added. ***Dietician hat on.***

This is merely a snippet of what it takes to carry out the CF routine and the many hats you wear to get your little one to keep on tracking along that strong healthy line.

It can be exhausting and it can definitely be testing especially with a toddler but the most

important hat of all is one worn daily...

Proud parent hat on.

Our little ones are spirited and strong. They can and will take on anything that comes their way because we will always be there to guide them. And even though there are moments you feel like it's just getting harder, we are reminded that we are also getting **stronger**.

Fighter hat on.