

Thwarting the thief of our 'identical twin identity'

'Which one is Coralie and which one is Donna?' asked a friend of the family.

We were often asked this question and for good reason, my identical twin sister and I looked like 'peas in a pod'. We were indistinguishable. We looked and acted the same.



However, around the time of our sixth birthday, Donna started to develop various symptoms including shortness of breath, severe lack of energy and excessive weight gain, even though we were eating the same, and she started having great difficulty with her schoolwork.

Our parents were concerned and during that period, Donna was taken to see doctors on numerous occasions but nobody was able to diagnose her correctly and more time was lost. In the meantime, Coralie became taller than her identical twin. Donna declined further and was demoted to a different class from Coralie at school. We no longer looked like identical twins.



Eventually, Donna was seen by a brilliant paediatrician who knew at a glance what was wrong and carried out tests to confirm his diagnosis of thyroid failure or hypothyroidism. It was necessary for Donna to be prescribed thyroxine tablets that she had to take daily. Thanks to ongoing prescriptions of thyroxine, Donna's growth and development caught up with Coralie's, Donna lost her excess weight, regained her energy and her schoolwork improved. We eventually looked alike again and we were put into the same class for the final year of junior school.



Unfortunately, during that school year, Coralie developed various symptoms including shortness of breath, lack of energy and weight gain. She was referred to the same paediatrician who was treating her twin and subsequently diagnosed with hypothyroidism too and was also prescribed thyroxine on an ongoing basis. As a result of treatment, Coralie lost the excess weight, gained energy and was no longer breathless on exertion. We regained parallel growth and development and looked alike again.

'Which one is Coralie and which one is Donna?' asked other students when we were at university.

We'd tell them which one was which and feel grateful that a tiny pill had enabled us to regain our 'identical twin identity'.

By Coralie Phillips & Donna Roach who are identical twin authors of several books on the topics of twins/multiples & hypothyroidism - www.thyroidbooks.co.uk