



Beatrice Spreadmoore's **Financial World**

Can Georgia Pull It Off?

Why you did not get what you expected

It was lurking in the dark, waiting to pounce. It's name, we found out later, was *Escherichia coli* (commonly referred to as *E. coli* O157).

She first noticed symptoms that seemed like the flu, including respiratory illness, urinary tract infections, temperatures of around 101 degrees, severe stomach cramps, and vomiting. She fought bravely on thinking that as in the past she could overcome this villain. A few days after the symptoms started she fell out of a chair while working, and that along with the incessant nagging of her mate caused her to agree to go to the emergency ward.

In short order a doctor with flushed face and blank, un-disclosing eyes told us that she had kidney failure and that a vicious virus was running amok throughout her body and was life threatening.

The doctor insisted that she be transferred to a hospital that had experts in infectious diseases and kidney failure. We asked that she be taken in a helicopter (for which we have insurance). The doctor said no that she needed to go in an ambulance (for which we do not have insurance). We continued to press the matter and the doctor took the position that the ambulance was much safer because the helicopter could crash on takeoff and landing. How can you argue with that logic? Of course the doctor was right. The ambulance did get there safely and did not crash.

The experts at the new hospital soon cornered the villain and was able to give us a name: *E. coli* O157. *E. coli* are a large and diverse group of bacteria. Although most strains of *E. coli* are harmless this kind of *E. coli* causes a disease by making a toxin called Shiga toxin. Around 5–10% of those who are diagnosed with STEC infection develop a potentially life-threatening complication known as hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). This is what Georgia was facing and there was a significant possibility of permanent damage or death.

After seven days of intense treatment and suffering through the indignities and humiliation of hospital care and hallucinations (visions of red and white ants crawling everywhere) Georgia was back in charge of most of her body and life.

My pal of 46 years is home and every day with her is a blessing (yes, I have to talk nice, cook, clean, and put up with cranky spells, but I wouldn't trade for anything). Right now she can only whisper on the phone, but the outlook is good and I imagine that you will soon have her undivided attention to the matters that are important to you. In the mean time play nice until she can join you.

Field Trips

[Strains of E. Coli](#)

Happy Trails,

B.S.