

Why Am I Having So Much Trouble Peeing?

“When I was five, I was living in Kenya. My aunt took me to a different town to have me cut. I still remember the day it happened because it was the most painful thing I had ever experienced. I did not understand what was happening to me, or why, since my aunt hadn’t told me anything in the bus ride over.

“At age ten and after moving to America, I constantly felt the need to pee. When I did, it hurt. At school, I would leave the classroom to run to the bathroom five or six times every hour. Once in the stall, I often couldn’t pee. My mom decided to take me to a gynecologist.

“When the gynecologist looked at my vagina, she gasped. After collecting herself, she explained that I had a vaginal infection caused by cutting. It had never occurred to me to link my cutting years ago to my health problems today. She prescribed antibiotics for my infection, and I stayed on them for years afterward.

“Over the years, I became more and more comfortable with my doctor. She knew how to treat my symptoms when they reappeared, and I continued seeing her until I was an adult.”