


HEALTH NEWS *from*

# temecula valley

WINTER 2018

## HOSPITAL



### *A mystery illness* **FINALLY SOLVED**

**"I am so relieved to  
have my life back!"  
- Katie Wheeler**

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HOSPITAL



# A mystery *no more*

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*Katie Wheeler  
finally gets  
some answers*

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**W**hat started as an apparent kidney infection led

Wheeler, 30, on a journey of repeated hospitalizations, tests and unanswered questions. It even derailed her quest to become a doctor.

But one morning, Wheeler was so ill, her mother called 9-1-1 and asked that her daughter be taken to Temecula Valley Hospital. She felt that a new team of physicians might shed some light on what was wrong. ➤





Wheeler was admitted and a multi-disciplinary team of doctors evaluated her and found she had sepsis, a life-threatening complication from infection. "I had been battling infections for such a long time and was on so many antibiotics, my immune system was not functioning properly," she says. "But the doctors at Temecula Valley were great and over the next 12 days, they gave me the right medications and treatment." Wheeler did well for a day or so at home, but then she was unable to eat or drink and started experiencing excruciating pain.



**Indraneel Chakrabarty, MD**  
Gastroenterologist

### ANSWERS FOUND

She saw Gastroenterologist Indraneel Chakrabarty, MD, and he re-admitted her to Temecula Valley. "I kept losing weight, and at 5'8" and 93 pounds, we knew there was a much bigger problem and Dr. Chakrabarty told me he was going to figure it out," says Wheeler. After running further tests, he diagnosed her with Superior Mesenteric Artery (SMA) syndrome, a rare digestive condition in which the upper part of the small intestine is compressed between two arteries, causing partial or complete blockage. "Now it all made sense. The more weight I lost, the worse my condition became. Dr. Chakrabarty took the lead on my treatment so I could gain weight," Wheeler says.

Wheeler's road to recovery continued, and she spent the next six weeks at Temecula Valley Hospital, where she became inspired to pursue her dream of becoming a doctor. "I was there long enough for the medical staff to become like family to me. Everyone worked together as a team. I had not experienced care like this before," she says. "This is what I always hoped medicine would be like, but through my personal health experiences, I learned it was not always this way. Here, I was at the worst point in my life, and every person made it better for me, from the people who cleaned my room, to the Chief Operating Officer."

### ONE STEP AT A TIME

Each day, Wheeler got stronger and the staff would root her on as she began to walk. "The first day, it was just to the door, but they still praised me. Before long, I was walking those hallways and feeling whole again," she says.

Since Wheeler's room was on the cardiac floor, she frequently saw Cardiologist Andrew Ho, MD. "No matter how busy he was, he would always stop by my room, even if it was a wave as he was passing by. I would look up and see his patriotic scrub hat and his hand waving as he walked by. He and Dr. Chakrabarty inspired and encouraged me to keep pushing and to not give up," Wheeler says.

Wheeler became more determined to finish her undergraduate studies so she could pursue medical school. "Katie has a positive outlook on life and she wants to give back and help people," says Dr. Ho.

Dr. Chakrabarty says he is very proud of Katie and her perseverance. "It is a testament to her spirit. This experience will forever shape her life and I have no doubt she will become a great doctor!" he says.

Wheeler says she's known since she was a child that she wanted to be in medicine, so she is grateful to be well enough now to continue her education to achieve that goal. "I was in the process of finishing a B.S. in Biology, a B.S. in Psychology and preparing for the MCATs when I got sick years ago. There is no doubt in my mind that I would not be here to talk about this today if it weren't for Temecula Valley Hospital. I am truly humbled and cannot wait to apply to medical school and help others in their darkest times as the doctors and staff there did for me," she says. ■

*For more information about gastrointestinal health issues, visit [temeculavalleyhospital.com/GI](http://temeculavalleyhospital.com/GI).*

