

# Kruse thankful for each day after being diagnosed with rare illness

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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Torrie Kruse has battled a lot of obstacles in her young life, but because of her determination she has learned to live with a difficult disease.

Kruse will graduate this year and will also be a member of the Edwardsville High School softball team in the spring, her passion.

Kruse has Wilson's Disease, which hampers her liver in processing copper. She suffered from acute liver failure more than a year ago and it looked like she might need a transplant, but medication stabilized her.

"I wasn't supposed to do as well as I did," she said. "The medication has worked a miracle on me. I will have to take medication twice a day the rest of life. I have a special diet because of my problems with copper."

Kruse said she was so thankful that because of medicine her liver is functioning normally again.

"I know it is difficult to take medication every day, but I am so grateful where I am," she said.

Wilson's Disease is a rare inherited disorder in which there is a high level of copper that accumulates in the liver and other organs. If not caught and treated, it can eventually result in serious harm to the nervous system, kidneys and eyes, as well as liver failure.

Symptoms generally take years to appear, usually between age four and the late teens. Symptoms include abdominal pain and swelling and jaundice.

Kruse has been starting first baseman on the Edwardsville softball team her sophomore and junior season. She has played softball since she was in fourth grade. She credits the Edwardsville School District 7 faculty and administration for working with her and supporting her so she could keep up with her schoolwork when she was sick.

She looks back each day and realizes that had she not been checked when she became sick, she could have died within a day or two.

"I have a very rare disease, but I am extremely thankful to the doctors at Children's for discovering it," she said. "Any time I am feeling sad or annoyed, I think of where I was at before. People don't realize how lucky they are to be healthy."