

# Betsy Christiansen's Update

June 19, 2008

## Update on my Niece Claire...

...from my sister Wendy in OH. You'll remember that I was up there twice this spring. Wendy's faith is strong, but Claire needs to know the Lord personally.

*Betsy*

Hi all,

Claire is scheduled to have her medi-port inserted tomorrow morning at OSU Medical Center and will begin 12 weeks of daily IV antibiotic infusions to treat her Lyme disease, babesiosis, and bartonella infections. It has taken 4 weeks to get everything arranged since she was conclusively diagnosed when she saw my Lyme doc in NYC the end of May. Thankfully insurance is paying this at 100%.

Just to recap, Claire has been sick and off work since the middle of March, and was hospitalized twice in April for a total of 16 days. She was overwhelmed with several very painful infections that a healthy immune system normally fights off. At that time she was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis but that didn't explain everything. After a lot of other bad autoimmune stuff was ruled out, I began to suspect Lyme disease. My hunch was right. Thankfully she has probably only had Lyme for 1-2 years, unlike me who went undiagnosed for at least 6 years. She will be off work for 3 more months.

Physically she has a lot of muscle and joint pain and fatigue and mornings are very tough. She does not have the cognitive and neurological symptoms that I've been dealing with. She's been going through all the expected emotions. She is being treated for depression and anxiety, but overall she feels pretty hopeless.

The unfortunate part of Lyme treatment is that once you start on antibiotics you feel worse before you feel better. As the bacteria die off they produce toxins so all her symptoms will get much worse. It's called a Herxheimer reaction and means that the antibiotics are doing their job.

Claire and her Madalyn have been living with Kassie and me for the last year. Madalyn turned 2 in February and is a joy. I think Claire would've given up without Madalyn as a motivator to keep going.

Claire will need a lot of encouragement and prayer to get through this season. Anything you might do to that end would be appreciated. Our address is 1861 Ridgebury Dr, Hilliard, OH 43026 if you want to send her a card.

Love,  
Wendy