

# Alannah designs to help fellow Crohns sufferers

A YOUNG Crohns sufferer from Huntly is using her experiences of the condition to help others.

Since undergoing surgery to fit a colostomy bag, Alannah Simpson (21), of East Park Street, has been producing stoma bag covers to bring confidence and comfort to others.

She said: "The stoma bags are sent worldwide. I get orders from people in Australia, Canada and America.

"The covers add a bit of glamour to the stoma bag and offer greater comfort. They are machine washable with a lip inside to catch any leakage, which gives the person more time to get to the bathroom which is reassuring.

"I receive orders from all ages and some of the designs are popular with parents whose kids are finding it difficult to come to terms with the stoma bag. Designs come in all patterns, including Disney and Super Mario."

Alannah was diagnosed with Crohns and Colitis at the age of 17 and is constantly trying to help others with the condition. She set up a Facebook page and regularly keeps in touch with her "crohniees".

"It is easy to dwell on the Crohns and it can get you down. Making the stoma covers is a positive thing I have been able to do to help others and take the focus away from my own health issues.

"Since getting the stoma I have had a better quality of life and don't need to run to the toilet all of the time.

"My immune system is so active that I am always catching infections. At one point I developed septicæmia and went into anaphylactic shock when I took a reaction to antibiotics.

"I was told that if they did not operate I could have died. I am now waiting for exploratory surgery as there is fluid collecting in the pelvic area and my surgery still has not healed properly. I don't respond to steroids any more and I am allergic to all antibiotics. I am constantly catching bugs and infections.

"Crohns is a hidden disease. It is tough when you are struggling and not feeling well. It's frustrating when folk say 'But you look OK so there is nothing wrong with you,' because you are constantly fighting a battle inside your body."

May 19 marks World IBD Day (inflammatory bowel disease), which aims to raise awareness of both Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

Crohn's and colitis are serious, chronic digestive diseases that affect five million people worldwide. Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis directly affect the digestive system and cause intestinal tissue to become inflamed, form sores and bleed easily. The disease has a tremendous impact on the physical and emotional wellbeing.

There is no cure, no known cause and little public understanding of the pain and chronic suffering which IBD patients cope with.

For more information visit the [www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk](http://www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk) website.

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Alannah Simpson and her mum Tracey Simpson, with some of the colostomy bag covers they have produced.

Picture: Becky Saunderson. Image No.033571