

**POMPOM CEREMONY:** after health scare

# Melissa back in the game

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A WOODLEY girl who loves cheerleading says a course of exercise has helped her gain control over curvature of the spine.

Melissa Allan, aged 12, of Edgell Road, faced a major operation to fuse her spine solid after finding out her back was crushing her lungs.

She had always been active and was passionate about cheerleading until her mother Cara started to notice her ribs were protruding on one side of her back.

She also complained of back ache and was struggling to keep up at her cheerleading club.

Her mum made an emergency appointment to see the family GP, who immediately gave Melissa a devastating diagnosis.

She was told she had scoliosis, or curvature of the spine.

She was told she would be referred to a specialist, but there was likely to be a three-month wait.

The Allan family decided to research the condition to find out how it might affect Melissa's dream of teaching cheerleading and going to America to cheerlead at a professional football game.

They discovered scoliosis was a progressive condition which needed to be treated as soon as possible, to prevent further damage.

Melissa's mum was disgusted she had been told to go home and wait for an appointment and decided to take matters into her own hands.

Scoliosis affects more than four per cent of the population and, if left untreated, can lead to fatal heart and lung problems.



**DELIGHTED:** Melissa has returned to practising her routines

Melissa loved cheerleading and would practise every day with her friends until her health started to deteriorate.

She found the condition reduced her flexibility and she lost confidence.

She faced possible major surgery and feared cheerleading and entering competitions would be out of the question.

Her mum searched the internet for alternative treatments and discovered Scoliosis SOS.

Founded and run by Erika Maude, who has scoliosis herself, the clinic opened seven years ago and has since brought relief to hundreds of sufferers.

It offers non-surgical treatments, which have been practised in Europe for decades.

Melissa's mum decided the treatment could do no harm and if it worked it could change her life.

She booked her into a four-week course and was impressed with the results.

Within weeks, Melissa's condition improved. She was no longer short of breath when doing exercise and her bubbly, confident personality had returned.

Having seen how bad a spinal curve could be, she was determined to work hard and get her scoliosis under control.

She learned a set of exercises which helped strengthen the muscles surrounding her spine to stabilise the scoliosis.

Since completing a course of ScolioGold treatment, she has returned home and been able to complete a full cheerleading rehearsal for the first time in months.

Melissa said: "Cheerleading is my life and I could not stand the idea of having to give it up, I was getting so paranoid about my appearance and I was so worried that jumping around was going to make my back worse.

"I felt like I was turning into an old lady, too paranoid to do anything.

"I love dancing and moving around and having to sit still and rest was just not me.

"Losing my flexibility would have meant the end of my dreams and I could not bear to think how unhappy it would have made me.

"The exercises were not easy, but the therapists made them fun and I feel like I am back in control.

"It's horrible being a teenager and feeling so confused and out of control of what's going to happen to you."

To find out more about the alternative treatment, visit [www.scoliosisSOS.com](http://www.scoliosisSOS.com).

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