

# Sarah's story



My name is Sarah Sajwani, I am 27 years old and I live in Dubai. I am an entrepreneur and former architect. I have Crohn's disease, affecting the terminal ileum.

I am also a Guinness World Record holder! I am passionate about landscape architecture and in 2018, I designed an image of Sheikh Zayed at the Zabeel Interchange and did it in record breaking time.

## Life before Crohn's

I had suffered stomach problems and have been in and out of many hospitals and had many lengthy stays. IBD was never mentioned as a possible cause, and every time I was admitted, I received a different diagnosis.

☞ When you walk the corridors of a hospital, and the doctors all know you by name, it is never a good thing. ☞

## How I felt

I found myself getting angry at absolutely everyone and everything. The only person I wasn't angry with was the doctor who had diagnosed me. We developed an instant connection.

## Advice for my younger self

☞ Learn how to accept the new way of living. See it as a blessing. ☞

## Mental health matters too

Doctors can take care of the physical side of an illness, but you need to care for your mental wellbeing as well.

## Diagnosis

When my doctor first told me I had a chronic illness, I was in shock, trying to grasp everything I was being told.

☞ At that moment, I felt like my life had ended. Looking back, this was actually the exact moment that my life started. ☞

## Looking forward

Nowadays, I see Crohn's as a blessing. What you do is up to you; if you want to let an IBD diagnosis limit the things you do, then it will.

☞ I made a conscious decision to not let it stop me doing anything I wanted to do. ☞

## Improving life for others with IBD

Awareness is key. Life would have been so much easier for me if I had known what IBD was.

## The Future

☞ If you asked me if you could take it all away, all the pain and medication, all the hospital stays, but not learn what I know about myself now - I would take Crohn's every time. ☞