

Olivia

“Despite the worst-case scenario, I felt ease because I knew my little girl was in good hands.”

-Virginia, Olivia's mom



Energetic, playful and always looking to jump and climb, Olivia was just like any other four-year-old although, from time to time, she would get a bellyache. Her tummy would start to feel worse and then bloat. When Olivia's mom, Virginia, noticed her daughter staying on the sidelines rather than playing center stage, she met with a pediatrician who referred her to Valley Children's for further testing.

Moments after X-rays and labs, Virginia carried a tired and weak Olivia to the car, but before she even left the parking lot, Valley Children's called her back. Olivia was quickly admitted to the hospital. The images had revealed several tumors that surrounded both her lungs. There were so many, but it was a large, 15-centimeter one that the doctors were most concerned about. That same day, Olivia was diagnosed with a stage 4 Wilms tumor on her right kidney.

“My eyes were immediately flooded with tears and I felt like I was kicked into a different dimension that was no longer reality,” explained Virginia. “Within two days, Olivia completed testing, received a diagnosis and was already receiving the chemo. So despite the worst-case scenario, I felt some ease because I knew my little girl was in good hands, and that everything that could be done to help her was, in fact, being done.”

Wilms tumor is a common type of childhood cancer that starts in the kidneys and can spread to other parts of the body. Common symptoms include abdominal pain,

fever, a low number of red blood cells (anemia), blood in the urine, high blood pressure and even loss of appetite, weight loss, nausea, vomiting and tiredness.

After just six weeks of treatment, Olivia responded so well that most of her tumors were gone and the larger tumor had reduced in size by 50%! This allowed doctors to operate and remove her cancerous kidney. The road ahead consisted of ongoing chemo – two weeks home while receiving care in the clinic, one week in the hospital. This went on for about nine months until the doctors at Valley Children's shared with Olivia that she was cancer-free!

“The goal the entire time was to remove her right kidney, but I understood all along that it would be a risky procedure,” added Virginia. “Her tumor was intertwined with so many veins, but her surgeon was able to scrape out every bit of cancer – and this saved her life. Because of the experts at Valley Children's, Olivia could celebrate her next birthday. I am so grateful!”

On October 13, 2021 Olivia turned five years old and got to ring the No Mo' Chemo bell at the hospital. That same day, Olivia introduced several relatives to her care team at Valley Children's who are like Olivia's extended family – everyone celebrating one very brave little girl... who is now back to playing at center stage.