DYING WOMAN’S PASSIONATE PLEA TO POTENTIAL LIVER DONORS

PLEASE SAVE MY LIFE

MAIL EXCLUSIVE

Rakeem Hyatt reports:
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“How long is a piece of string?” she says.
“I might not get it in time. I have to face that. I don’t know what is going to happen. “My liver might not survive for another six months. I take a day at a time.”

Born with biliary atresia, which blocks the bile ducts so bile builds up in the liver and damages it, the clock has always been ticking. An operation at Birmingham Children’s Hospital when she was an infant helped slow that clock.

But in February this year, Sunaina, who lives in Edgbaston, became more ill than ever before. After fighting sporadic liver infections since she was 16, often lasting months at a time, the recent bout has proved the final straw.

“Usually I have two weeks of intravenous antibiotics and it’s fine,” says Sunaina. “I had that and came home, and they put me on oral antibiotics. It was supposed to be a six to eight-week course. “But I just got the infection back and even worse. That was February and I am still on them now.”

Matters have reached the stage where only a liver transplant offers the chance of a longer life – but so far the outlook remains bleak.

“It’s a horrible situation because I know that someone has to pass away to be able to give me life,” she says. “It’s something I struggle with sometimes. It’s just not nice someone having to pass away in order to save me. “I think until it happens to maybe a family member or a friend, you don’t realise how important it is to save someone’s life. “In general, we don’t donate as much as we should. With one body, one person, you can save so many lives.”
SUNAINA has had to grow up with biliary atresia – and has fared better than some, her mum says.

"She was my first child," says Sianne Paul, 52. "I had no idea, no concept of what babies were meant to look like.

"She was jaundiced. The nurses basically said 'It's normal, give it two or three days and the jaundice will settle.

"In an Asian person jaundice is completely different. She had a greeny colour to her, and the whites to her eyes were slightly pale.

"After five days it didn't settle. A month went by, and the family GP saw she had a distended stomach and an odd greenish colour, but he just said it was just colic.

"By the time she was six weeks old, my health visitor said we should see somebody else about it."

Sunaina's case was referred to Birmingham Children's Hospital where she was admitted as an urgent case, rushng her infant body into surgery for corrective treatment.

The operation, known as the Kasai procedure, would act as a temporary measure to re-establish bile flow from the liver.

Sadly, biliary atresia cannot be cured, but this procedure was the best way of treating the disease if done as early as possible.

"In Sunaina's case, she was lucky," says Sianne. "She has gone on up until now with that little procedure that was done to her tiny body.

"She has managed to somehow fight back all these years."

Courageous Sunaina has achieved much, too. After graduating from De Montfort University in 2009 with a BA in Human Resource Management and Marketing, Sunaina began working at HSBC in Birmingham. Working within Quality Assurance Control she has worked for the company for 10 years.

Thinking back to her daughter's early years, Sianne admits: "I didn't know the enormity of what was going on. I had her at the age of 21, and I don't know how I would have prepared myself.

"I don't think I am prepared even now and I am a lot older."

Although many black and Asian patients are able to receive a transplant from a white donor, for many the best blood and tissue match will come from someone of the same ethnic background.

Sunaina is using her story to campaign for those from a minority ethnic background to register for organ donation to save a life just like her own.

It may not be in time for her, but it will be a lifeline for others.

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A PRISON worker who became pregnant after having sex with an inmate has been jailed.

Kirsty Howat from Staffordshire has been jailed for eight months after engaging in a sexual relationship with 20-year-old Liam Moretto while he was an inmate at HMP Brinsford and she was a catering instructor.

That resulted in her pregnancy - but when the Prison and Probation Service found out, it ultimately resulted in Howat being jailed herself. Kirsty Howat, 24, of Sudbury Place, Staffordshire, admitted misconduct in a public office at Shrewsbury Crown Court on Thursday, September 12.

The prison authorities were suspicious of the relationship and gathered evidence from a covert CCTV camera. Howat accepted a relationship but denied sexual intercourse. However, she later admitted the inappropriate relationship, saying she had 'panicked', which is why she had previously denied sexual relations.

Howat also admitted that she used the prison systems to obtain confidential information about another prisoner with whom Moretto was in conflict and that she passed that information on to Moretto.

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