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TELEGRAPH

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Sheffield boy sleeps for 22 hours a day



Mitchell Baldwin from Arbourthorne who suffers from 'Sleeping Beauty Syndrome' meaning he can fall asleep for days at a time.

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A FAMILY from Sheffield is appealing for expert help as their teenage son battles a rare condition which makes him sleep for up to a month at a time.

Mitchell Baldwin, aged 14, has been diagnosed with Kleine-Levin Syndrome - also known as Sleeping Beauty Syndrome - a neurological disorder which means he cannot stay awake.

For weeks at a time Mitchell, from Arbourthorne, will sleep for 22 hours a day, waking up just to eat before he falls asleep again.

"It just feels like a dream, like it's not happening," said the Sheffield Springs Academy pupil.

"My head feels really heavy and I'm just so tired.

"It's really frustrating. My life is passing me by."

Mitchell has missed exams and slept through holidays.

And his parents, mindless with worry, do not know where to turn.

"Most of the doctors we have spoken to just have not heard of it," said dad Wayne, 31.

"Even the top neurologists at Sheffield Children's Hospital do not really know what to do, and there doesn't seem to be a cure."

Wayne, who works in a sandwich shop, and his wife Nicola, 38, a cleaner, have been told Mitchell is the only person in Sheffield with the disease, which hits around 40 people in the UK.

"We've always told Mitchell that if he wants to have more from life than we have, he needs to work hard at school," said Wayne.

"He is a brainy kid and works hard, but he is missing his exams.

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“He was just sleeping all the time, but we thought he was just tired,” said Wayne.

“When we came home we took him to the NHS walk-in centre on Broad Lane and they said he had tonsillitis.

“After two more days it was obvious that wasn’t the problem, so we took him to A&E at Sheffield Children’s Hospital.”

Doctors there diagnosed encephalitis - a swelling of the brain - and Mitchell soon started to recover. But just four weeks after the first episode he started falling asleep again.

“The hospital said there was no way he could have encephalitis for a second time and that’s when they realised it was Kleine-Levin Syndrome.

“The neurologist said he had never come across it before.”

An eight-month gap followed, in which time Mitchell’s parents hoped the syndrome had gone away. But three weeks ago Mitchell started falling asleep at school and his friends realised something was wrong.

“He slept for 12 days this time,” said Wayne. “He just sleeps and sleeps. You shake him and he just can’t wake up.

“When he does wake up he just eats everything he can get his hands on and goes to sleep again.”

Mitchell is now recovered from his third episode with the condition - and is back at school today.

But his [parents](#) do not know when it will strike again.

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