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MailOnline

Real life Sleeping Beauty: Teenager with rare condition snoozes for 12 days at a time

• Shannon suffers a sleeping episode around once a month

By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

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Costly: Shannon had a sleepy episode during her GCSEs which meant she failed some exams

A teenager has missed birthdays, Christmases, and family holidays - because she has Sleeping Beauty Syndrome.

Shannon Magee can sometimes take 12 days to wake up and will gorge on sweets and chocolate without knowing what she is doing.

For five years, the 17-year-old from Bolton, Greater Manchester, has suffered from Kleine-Levin Syndrome (KLS) - a complex neurological disorder.

She needs excessive amounts of rest as a result and even slept through her GCSE exams.

Only 45 people in the UK have been diagnosed with the condition.

Shannon, who has two brothers and three sisters, said the condition has changed her life.

She said: 'It is like being awake in a coma. It takes part of your life away with it. It's like I'm in my own little world and I don't recognise people.'

Shannon has episodes each month, which usually last about 12 days, during which time she can sleep for about 22 hours per day.

When she is awake, her behaviour changes as she can become aggressive and demands sweets and chocolate, and needs around-the-clock care from her parents. It also affects her memory, and she says huge chunks of her teenage years are blank.

Shannon said: 'I struggled through secondary school, and the teachers didn't believe what was happening to me.'



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Shannon wants to train to become a nurse but is worried about how her condition could affect her job

'I didn't really like to tell anyone at school, so I drifted away from a lot of people and I failed some of my GCSEs because I was in a sleepy episode.'

After years of tests and examinations, Shannon was finally diagnosed with KLS after her dad, Christopher Dodd, researched her symptoms online.

WHAT IS KLEINE-LEVIN SYNDROME?

KLS is a neurological condition that starts during adolescence, and sometimes will begin after an infection or illness.

It is characterised by periods of excessive sleep of up to 20 hours a day. This symptom lasts between days and weeks. During such an episode a sufferer may be irritable, childish, disorientated and want to eat excessive amounts of food. Patients are fine between episodes.

Shannon is just one of 1,000 people worldwide to suffer from the disorder which is commonly known as Sleeping Beauty Syndrome. 70% of sufferers are male.

There is no known cure for the sleeping disorder.

Her mother, Julie Ratcliffe, 56, said: 'They were taking blood tests because they thought she was drunk or on drugs, then they thought it was epilepsy.

'Even when we go to appointments and it is on her medical records, the doctors don't know what it is.

'When she is in an episode it can be very stressful and she can be very challenging.

'She has a vague expression on her face and I can get about 50 texts at work asking for things because she has forgotten she has already texted.'

She added: 'We feel better knowing it is not life-threatening, but there is not enough information, nobody knows the answers.'

The teenager now wants to become a nurse so she can help others but is worried her condition will get in the way.

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A real sleeping beauty.

- Roy, London, 18/7/2012 23:10

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Rare syndrome?!! on average DM reports examples of KLS (all involving pretty girls) twice a year, as this is the third such story so far this year, is it on the increase or is someone getting lazy?

- enuf sed, ere'n'there, 18/7/2012 20:49

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Sleeping 22 hrs/day, aggressive and demanding sweets and chocolate-typical teenager if u ask me.....actually quite a good one for these days

- Uncle Bulgaria, Wimbledon Common, 18/7/2012 18:42

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she has been on the tele about 3 years ago and in magazines, we know all about it already, why is she now in the paper?

- sarah, glasgow, 18/7/2012 17:39

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how does she control her bladder/bowels when she is asleep for so long? Nappies or catheter?

- KKP, yorkshire, 18/7/2012 17:36

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