

Specialists online at St George's



Dean Wilcox, his parents and physiotherapist Kirsten Nutman talk to consultants online and (right) the London neurology team on the screen.

► One of the live video clinics, attended by Havering patient Dean Wilcox, was recently filmed by BBC crews at St George's and the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery for a BBC World broadcast. In August 2007, Dean, from South

Hornchurch, was playing football when he had a cardiac arrest which resulted in severe damage to his brain. He is confined to a wheelchair, and has spasticity problems which cause his muscles to involuntarily contract. Dean, 22, is cared for by his parents Lyn

and Kevin. The 'clenching' of his hands and limbs can make simple tasks like washing very difficult and he wakes several times during the night, possibly due to the discomfort caused by muscle spasms.

At 6ft 3 inches it is a challenge for his parents to move him, but their main concern is that he should not be put through any stress or discomfort. Kirsten Nutman felt Dean would be an ideal candidate for Neuroview.

At St George's Hospital, Dean was seen via the video link by Dr Val Stevenson, consultant Neurologist at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery. Other members of the neurology and therapy teams from both hospitals were present.

Dr Stevenson asked Lyn and Kevin how recent changes in Dean's medication had affected him. Lyn reported that



since the dosage had been reduced, Dean has been more alert but there had been little change in his muscle stiffness. Kirsten demonstrated the range of movement in Dean's legs and zoomed in the camera so the consultant could see clearly.

The clinical staff discussed with the Wilcox family the possibility of administering Dean's anti-spasmodic medication via a pump into his spinal cord. This would mean that the dosage could be reduced further.

Dr Stevenson suggested that he could have his medication earlier in the morning so Dean's muscles would be more relaxed before washing.

Lyn said: "It is so helpful to be given specialist information and advice this way. Anything that makes Dean more comfortable we want to do, which is why we are so grateful to have this link."



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Check your lung health

Over 10,000 people in Havering may be unaware that they have serious and possibly life-threatening lung disease.

Free lung disease tests and advice will be on offer at an event organised by Havering's NHS Respiratory Team this Wednesday, November 17, from 10am to 3pm, in the canteen at St George's Hospital, Suttons Lane, Hornchurch.

Nurses and physiotherapists from the Respiratory Team at St George's Hospital,

a local GP, Havering Stop Smoking Service and support group Breathe Easy, will be available to give advice on conditions such as chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

The event at St George's marks World COPD Day, which aims to raise awareness of lung disease and improve care for patients.

COPD is an umbrella term for a number of lung conditions which kill around 30,000 people a year in Britain.

Log on for mental health

In the last issue of *Living*, we printed an incorrect address for the web service where residents can access advice and information on mental health.

The correct address for the service is <http://havering.bigwhitehall.com>. Apologies to our readers for any inconvenience caused.