

Dear staff

After many years of endless chest infections (and occasional hospital admissions) my life revolved around constant visits to my GP with more and more antibiotics and steroids being prescribed with each visit. I felt exhausted and slept many hours during each day and my social life was almost at a standstill.

What a relief it was to have an appointment to see Dr Sarah Goddard at the Royal Stoke Hospital, because I was finally getting to see someone who could help me. I had blood tests prior to the appointment and I was quite nervous going into my consultation. Dr Goddard immediately put me at my ease and explained that my immune system was so low that I could not fight the continual chest infections. She explained that the treatment I was about to start was called Gammaplex which is a solution for intravenous infusion, which was to start within a few days.

There is no pain (apart from a tiny scratch as the needle is inserted) and one sits in a comfortable chair for the duration. My infusions last for about four hours but once over I am able to drive home.

Initially, it was a shock to my system and I had a few minor side effects but after the third treatment I started to feel so much better as my Immunoglobulin levels increased so the tiredness decreased, but the most amazing thing to happen was that within a few months my chest infections had lessened considerably too. I am now over 18 months into my treatment and I rarely need to take steroids and my energy levels have increased considerably.

I do believe in self-help too, so anything I can do to help the treatment work can only be a good thing so I exercise regularly by walking four miles three times a week. I also joined a Health Club to take advantage of their swimming pool which I attend three times a week. I swim underwater to help build up my lung capacity and the Asthma tests at the hospital have proved this to be working well.

With regular blood tests and consultations with Dr Goddard and her team and also the nurses who administer my infusions every three weeks I feel am being really well looked after and I send my sincere thanks to them all for giving me a new life.

Marjorie Thornbar