

Ulcerative Colitis Sunita, Lancashire



Sunita normally works part-time in police professional role, but is currently on maternity leave with her second baby girl. Her first symptoms of Ulcerative Colitis started when she was at university, where she experienced bloody diarrhoea and anaemia – typical of signs of IBD. However, her diagnosis took over three years, because by the time she managed to obtain a referral, her symptoms had temporarily resolved. At the time, Sunita managed her anaemia through a combination of a careful diet and supplements. She continued her degree in Sociology and Criminology.

Sunita's memorable date is 19th November 2000 when she was juggling work as a Special Constable with her voluntary work at the Asian Disability Alliance. The Alliance was putting on a play and Sunita was determined to take part, although she felt

seriously unwell. The strain however took its toll and Sunita was hospitalised on the night, having collapsed at home. Taken to A&E, Sunita required re-hydration, a transfusion and intravenous steroids.

She is now off steroids and with the help of mesalazine and azathioprine, the good news is that Sunita's health is pretty stable. She is cared for at her district general hospital which provides two IBD specialist nurses who are easily accessible when Sunita's disease flares-up. Between them, the nurses and the doctors provide Sunita with a continuity of care that was missing at previous hospitals where she saw a different doctor every time she attended the out-patient department.

Sunita comments: "When visiting your doctor you want to know that they are aware of your past medical history and are the experts. However, if you have to recall your entire medical/ surgical history combined with the added pressure of meeting a new face and explaining intimate details to a completely unknown individual it can be frustrating and must waste NHS time."

Messages:

- The diagnosis of Ulcerative Colitis can be delayed if symptoms aren't promptly recognised and investigated
- Continuity of specialist medical care is important to patients with IBD
- Access to rapid telephone support from IBD specialist nurses is important
- Ulcerative Colitis can be severe enough to need emergency admission to hospital.