

CHLOE'S STORY

It's a weird feeling facing the prospect of having an operation that you've had before yet have no memory of!!

When I was 10 weeks old I went up to Guys with my parents for an outpatients appointment and ended up staying for two weeks. My Mum didn't know what had hit her and my Dad spent these days travelling from one destination to the other with clothes and the like, for the three of us. I had to have an emergency catheterisation and ballooning for co-arctation of the aorta. I spent a week in Caleb ICU ward and then spent the last week on Rothschild.

At eighteen months I spent three days on Rothschild again for another ballooning. My Mum and Dad have told me what it was like for them and how scary it was, but yet I still don't fully understand it. They told me about Dr. Qureshi and what he did for me.

Recently, I've been up to London for MRI scans and treadmill tests. I couldn't help but feel a little bit scared by the whole situation but I took in my stride and got on with it. Afterwards I felt almost slightly proud of myself. When I had my first MRI scan without sedation about three years or so ago, there was an older woman in before me. We had both been asked if we would mind staying in a bit longer so they could take some pictures to use in a medical study. I felt pleased with myself because I said that I would do it and the older woman who was about twenty years older than me said that she wouldn't because she was too scared, she wanted to stay in there for as little time as possible. It was very weird being in a large tube for a long period of time. Not only did I listen to the most horrendous classical music, I also had to lie still for a long time...which is not something I do particularly well!! The treadmill test this year, tired me out and made me wonder how bad my condition is. I carried on for a long while though and the doctor even said it was a long time for someone like me to go. I was pleased and left the hospital with

a smile on my face.

After Dr. Qureshi successfully carried out my ballooning fifteen years ago, I came back for another appointment last September about my upcoming operation in February for balloning again and insertion of a stent. It was a strange feeling meeting the man that saved my life. My Mum and Dad tell me that I owe a lot to him although this is the first time I've properly met him.



Chloe West

As soon as I turned the corner of one of the corridors in Evelina Children's Hospital, Doctor Qureshi looked at me and gasped in disbelief. Not only did I meet him but I also met Trish Kenny who was the Sister on Rothschild when I first had my operation. They both remembered me and my family. It was bizzare for Mum and Dad as it all came flooding back to them.

Dr. Qureshi explained the procedure for my operation in February and told me how long I would be in hospital and how long I would have to stay off school. I am feeling a little

nervous at the moment about my operation but as soon as it becomes closer to it I'm sure I will feel a lot more scared. Not only am I worried about the operation, I am also anxious about all the work I'm going to have to catch up on in school.

I am in my first GCSE year and at the moment and not sure how I am going to cope with all the work I'm going to have to deal with. At the same time I am feeling

slightly intrigued about having this operation. All my friends, family and teachers have all been very supportive and understanding about it.

For now, I am going to put it to the back of my mind and get on with enjoying my netball, football, friends and just being a teenager, as the saying goes, I'll cross that bridge when it comes to it!!

Chloe West was born in 1991 with Coarctation of the Aorta