

Parents urge others to be vigilant about kids' eyesight

'Amazing' Eleanor coping with tumour

By Sophie Jones

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THE family of a seven-year-old Hampton girl who is undergoing 52 weeks of chemotherapy for a brain tumour have urged parents to be vigilant about their children's eyesight.

Eleanor Stollery is now blind, reads using braille, and is learning to walk with a cane due to the Hypothalamic low-grade Glioma.

She was diagnosed at four years old, but now a secondary tumour has appeared she will need further chemotherapy via a Portacath – a device fitted into a large vein to ensure the drugs are diluted quickly in the blood.

Mr Stollery said: "She had it fitted last Thursday. This next regime will knock her immune system out; an infection could cause her serious problems.

"The main tumour affecting her eyesight is not growing at the moment, but the second one is growing at a rate doctors are not happy with, and that could have other disabling implications if it got too big."

"It's very hard on us, we are trying to carry on as normally as possible and not let it disrupt her schooling. She's a bright kid.

"She copes amazingly well considering – children are very resilient."

Mr Stollery wants to raise awareness of the symptoms because if not for the family's persistence, Eleanor's first tumour could have been missed.

After being fobbed-off elsewhere, Mr Stollery and his partner took Eleanor to Moorfields Eye Hospital, who have a walk-in



Eleanor Stollery recovering with 'Doggy' after the Portacath surgery

clinic.

"They said there's nothing wrong with her eyes, and sent us to St George's Hospital for an MRI," he said.

The MRI revealed the tumour, about the size of a ping-pong ball. "It was horrible. That was a long time ago now," said Mr Stollery.

His message to parents worried about their child's eyesight is not to panic, but to "make sure they get it thoroughly checked and allay their fears".

Despite her disability, Eleanor

is making lots of progress.

"She amazes me," said Mr Stollery. "We were walking out of school with three children ahead of us, one girl had a toy in her hand called a fingerling and Eleanor said, 'someone has a fingerling' - she could hear it."

Her heightened sense of hearing is caused by her blindness.

Mr Stollery said: "She has shadows only, black and white blobs. She doesn't see faces. She doesn't remember what we look like, her

last memory is of the Eiffel Tower."

Eleanor is getting increasingly independent thanks to her specialist teacher.

"She's doing extra mobility lessons now, she goes into supermarkets and asks for assistance. Next, she is going to go on a train journey with her teacher – we will be watching," said Mr Stollery.

You can follow Eleanor's journey on Twitter @ERStollery and through her website at eleanorstollery.com/

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