

Your GOOD HEALTH

- Real-life stories
- Latest health news
- Expert advice

When Holly's daughter felt unwell, she wasn't expecting such a shock diagnosis

'I can see DOUBLE'

Holly Atkins, 34
Hemel Hempstead, Herts

As my daughter Otilie, six, and I walked around our local shopping centre, she sighed.

'I've just got one more shop, then we can go to soft play if you want,' I said.

A big smile swept across her face.

Otilie loved soft play, and she'd been a bit poorly lately, so I was hoping that might cheer her up.

Her dad Phil and I sat there while she had a run about and let off some steam.

But after half an hour, she came back over to us.

'What's up, love?' I asked. 'I'm really dizzy and sick,' she quietly said.

She also looked really pale.

We decided to go home and as we were walking, I noticed how Otilie's balance was off even though she was holding my hand.

Once we got home, we settled in to watch a film and she seemed fine once she had eaten.

But as Otilie potted about

the house, she suddenly said, 'I can see double.'

'What do you mean?' I asked.

'I can see two of everything,' she said.

When I bent down and looked at her eyes, I noticed they weren't moving in unison.

I thought it was especially odd as we'd taken her to get her eyes checked just a week ago and they were fine.

'Something is wrong,' I worriedly said to Phil.

'There's something off about Otilie's eyes.'

We rang 111 who suggested we take her to the local urgent care centre, but when we found out the wait time was three hours, we took her straight to hospital instead.

When we arrived, Otilie was seen by doctors and nurses who checked her blood pressure, oxygen levels and did neurological examinations.

Doctors weren't able to diagnose her right away, so over the next three weeks, she



Me and Otilie

underwent more tests to find out what was the cause of her dizziness and double vision.

It wasn't until after having an MRI that doctors had a shock diagnosis for us.

'Otilie has suffered a stroke,' he explained.

My mum and I were absolutely stunned.

'But how?' I asked.

I had never heard of children having strokes, especially one as young as Otilie.

Doctors explained it was incredibly rare and around only 400 children a year in the UK have strokes.

They thought the case of

chickenpox she'd had last year triggered a stroke.

Otilie had a few chickenpox and she was rundown for a few days, so we hadn't thought anything of it.

But after looking at her MRI, they believed it caused swelling to her brain which caused her to have a stroke.

I rang Phil who was at home to tell him the news.

'Are you sitting down?' I cried. 'Doctors have said Otilie had a stroke.'

He couldn't believe it.

Otilie was then sent to Great Ormond Street Hospital for further tests, and she was given glasses and a patch to help with her double vision.

She was incredibly brave throughout the entire ordeal, and now she's doing fine.

At the moment, Otilie needs regular MRIs and we have to keep an eye on her.

We also have to do everything to minimise any trauma to her, so right now, she's not allowed on trampolines, bouncy castles, or to go to gymnastics.

But doctors have said it's rare that she will have another stroke.

We never thought our little girl would have a stroke, but it's made us more vigilant, and we want other parents to know the symptoms and signs.



Otilie in hospital

**TURN
OVER FOR
MORE
HEALTH**