



CONNECT HEALTH Bee-inspired



The Patient's story

Tom Mackey, 77 years of age and a former draftsman for the electricity board, tells his story.

“ If the physio had not empowered me to look out for a change in symptoms, I could have been left with permanent bladder/bowel problems.”

Tom avoids serious long term health complications due to expert advice from physio

In June 2017, I stepped onto a bus platform and without any warning, I experienced excruciating pain in the small of my back and legs and was almost unable to walk.

My wife managed to get me home and I took some pain killers but my mobility was badly effected and I needed a walking stick. I persevered for a few months, fluctuating in and out of pain, until September.

Eventually I went to see the GP who put me in touch with Connect. I had a physio telephone consultation within days and given an appointment to meet the physio Steve Barwick at the GP surgery on the Thursday, who gave me a course of exercises to carry out at home, which I was prepared to do and whilst they were helping a little, I still felt in a great deal of pain.

The physio explained the signs and symptoms of cauda equina syndrome and the urgency involved should these occur

Steve pointed out to me, and this was the crux of the matter, that **if I had any numbness in my groin area or incontinence to go straight to A&E**, where they would most likely do an MRI scan. **He empowered me to act, saying if I lost any sensation, to go straight to hospital.**

On the following Sunday, it was my Grandson's 21st birthday party and for some reason I didn't quite make it to the toilet. So I took Steve's advice and decided to go to A&E at the Royal Victoria Infirmery the next morning for tests and MRI scan.

The doctor was looking to get me in for an operation there and then. However as that wasn't possible, the next day, the mobile rang and I headed off to the hospital straight away and arrived on Tuesday at 9pm for assessments overnight.

On the Wednesday afternoon they performed a Discectomy - took a disc out - and they pared away the bones so the nerves had a smooth passageway. And after that I was put back on the ward and by Thursday I was back home.

I felt wonderful. I went in hardly able to walk and was able to walk out 2 days later

I would never have thought that a little bit of incontinence at my age, was the signal to something so serious. **But because of what the physio had told me, I knew I had to act.** And for that reason I felt extremely grateful to Steve and the team.

I have no lasting symptoms and feel fit and well





The Physio's story - Steve Barwick

Cauda equina syndrome (CES) is a serious complication where extreme pressure occurs from a prolapsed disc on the sciatic nerve roots as they leave the spinal cord.

If patients with cauda equina syndrome do not receive treatment quickly, adverse results can include paralysis, permanent impaired bladder/bowel control, difficulty walking, and/or other neurological and physical problems.

The problem is it's a collection of signs and symptoms and there is often not a cut and dry answer.

When I met with Tom, he showed some signs such as a new onset of back pain with long standing bladder changes but no recent changes and not enough to warrant a trip to A&E. So I advised that if he had any incontinence or numbness, he must go to A&E and advise of the changes to his symptoms and request the appropriate assessment. I was really impressed by Tom's attitude. Not everyone follows the advice we give so I'm so pleased he acted on it.

The great thing is now Tom is symptom free as it was caught very early, treated well with no long lasting effects.

When he came for his check-up, my reaction was such a surprise - I couldn't believe how quickly he got to his feet, he was walking really well, with no stick - it was a wonderful experience.



Floor 2, The Light Box,
Quorum Business Park,
Benton Lane,
Newcastle upon Tyne,
Tyne and Wear,
NE12 8EU

Tom - How would you sum up your whole experience?

My understanding of my health has been increased out of all measure - this has laid down the pathway I should follow.

I thought Steve was great, so good at his job, he explained things thoroughly and he certainly knows what he's talking about. **The biggest thing was he gave me the path to follow, for that I'm externally grateful.**

My wife is as positive about it as I am. She's noticed a difference in the way I walk. **Before I would ask her to slow down, now she's tells me to slow down.**

I have been advised by the physio to go to the gym to work on the treadmill, exercise bikes and cross trainer. **I went in to hospital like a human question mark and came out straight as a pole.**

Connect key features

- We follow guidelines and best practice for red flags
- Prompt access to our services help get patients to the right place quickly
- Patients value our services
- We have a big impact on patient outcomes

If you'd like to find out more about working at Connect, contact hr@connecthealth.co.uk



0191 250 4580
generalenquiries@connecthealth.co.uk
connecthealth.co.uk