

## **MRF Media contact READING, Berkshire**

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### **Reading mum's warning: Babies under one hit hardest by meningitis and septicaemia.**

Elizabeth Slocombe.

Elizabeth's son Alistair had pneumococcal meningitis at Christmas 2003 aged 8 months. Elizabeth picked Alistair up from nursery and he was unwell. She thought it was 'just another cold' and temperature as Alistair was always picking up colds. His condition worsened and she took him to the GP then a local hospital who discharged him at 1am as Alistair did not have the rash that everyone observed for. At 6am Alistair was found fitting in his cot and was rushed back to the hospital. By chance the PICU transfer team were attending the hospital. They intubated Alistair and transferred him to Bristol Children's Hospital where he was placed on life support for two weeks. He wasn't expected to survive.

Alistair suffered septicaemia. His blood vessels also reacted to the pneumococcal bacteria resulting in kidney failure, and severe brain damage. He was at imminent risk of losing his limbs. He also suffered peritonitis.

At first Alistair could not move his limbs, swallow, had profound hearing loss and sight loss. He has a cochlear implant to aid hearing and is dependent on a shunt to stop fluid building up in his brain. Gradually his movement, swallow reflex and sight returned but he still has some difficulties. He is now a very brave, active and enthusiastic boy with a passion for climbing, cars and films. He is at a mainstream school with a hearing resource unit.

Quote for media use: Said Liz: "My son Alistair suffered from pneumococcal meningitis in 2003 aged just 8 months. At first I thought it was just a cold, but he became more ill very quickly. I found him fitting in his cot and rushed him to hospital. He was in Intensive Care and on a ventilator for two weeks, but with the help of dedicated teams he miraculously recovered.

"Alistair has hearing loss and a cochlear implant as a result of the disease, and has sensory difficulties, but I'm just glad he survived. Babies under one year old are 38 times more likely to suffer from meningitis, and two babies die from the diseases every week. Knowing the symptoms and getting medical help if you suspect a case is vital, that's why I'm supporting MRF's Meningitis Awareness Week."

Willing to do: Press, Radio, TV  
If you'd like to talk to Elizabeth, contact MRF's Communications team: 01454 281811