



Lets face it.

Chris Spivey & The Daily Chimpanzee

I can totally empathise with Zara Greens heartache and anxiety she felt for her daughter Connie – a child born with a very common hemangioma, a kind of benign tumour.

Hemangioma's are also known as a Nevus – much more user friendly.

You see, my daughter Stacey was born with one and it is horrifying to watch what looked like a small scratch grow and grow into a massive tumour.

My Stacey's Nevus was in fact much, much bigger than Zara Greens daughter Connie, albeit the position of Connies couldn't really be much worse than it is appearance wise.

However, Stacey's was on her cheek and was so large that when viewing her profile from the left you were unable to see her nose for the Nevus.

It did in fact grow so big that it twisted her mouth and was in danger of damaging her eye. At that point she was put on steroids which meant a weekly journey up to Great Ormond Street hospital in London.



Photo: Stacey approximately 8 months old and on steroids

Now, as I say, Nevus's are very common but can grow anywhere on a baby's body (they are more common in premature babies)

and to varying sizes – some very small and flat. Others very big and and prominent.

However, unless like Staceys and Connies they grow on the face, it is only the immediate family who are aware of them.

Sadly, apart from cosmetic surgery there is no treatment for these abnormalities of the blood vessels except for steroids sometimes given to halt a large tumours growth but which Doctors are very reluctant to give to babies for obvious reasons.

Having said that, many Nevus's go on their own as the child gets older, leaving a barely noticeable darker circle of skin in its place.

Unfortunately, the bigger lumps have to be surgically removed as was the case with Connie and my Stacey, when they were around the age of 10 or 11.

Stacey did in fact have to have 4 operations to remove hers – three to remove the tumour and one for laser surgery to remove the colour.



Photo: Stacey after her 3rd operation.

The reason for the three ops was because if the Plastic Surgeon had removed the tumour in one go, it would have left the lower left side of Stacey's face paralysed and with a massive scar to boot.

However, by removing it in three, the surgeon was able to prevent any paralysis and leave a much smaller scar which travels along the natural line of her face that you see when she smiles.

This makes the scar barely detectable unless you know it is there.

So, fair to say then that the Great Ormond Street Surgeon did a fantastic job on my daughter's face.



Photo: Stacey and my older daughter Carioline (different mother to stacey) before the final laser surgery

Unfortunately, I do have a couple of serious gripes with the hospital, which I won't talk about now since they are not really relevant to the story in so much as the gripes relate to faults on the hospitals part.

And besides, I don't want to detract from the brilliant job they did on her face and the overall care Gt Ormond St Hospital gave us over 13 years.



Photo: Stacey pre-school

However, though no one wants to see their child have to go through the trauma of an operation, it is the first ten or eleven years of Connies life of which I can empathise the most with Zara Green.

You see, I too was worried about how Stacey would be treated at school as children can be very cruel... Although adults can be worse.

For this reason I didn't send Stacey to play school until she was four and only then because it was connected to the small primary school I had managed to get her into (it was out of our catchment area).

Fortunately, Rochford is quite a small place and with me being a Tattoo Artist I was very well known anyway.



Photo: Stacey first day at school

I was also very protective of Stacey, and never shied away from people who quite often gawped at her in horror.

I had no problem with people who were upfront and asked me what that Monster was that was growing over Staceys face.

But Cunts who I would often catch looking at her in horror I would take to task.

Therefore, as a result of those three factors, Stacey didn't really have any problems at school, but it didn't stop me worrying about her and fearing for her future as she got older – as obviously I didn't know about the smashing job that the the surgeon would perform a few years down the line.

Now, like Zara, I was also given information about the charity 'Saving Faces', but I am not one for support groups and didn't join.

Having said that, many people do not have the advantages that

I had to allow me to cope with a child with a facial disfigurement and as such I believe that the charity does a fantastic job for both the children – many, many who are cruelly facially disfigured with no hope of improvement – and parents who need a support network.

So, the next time that you are feeling down, Google [Saving Faces](#). The smiles on the faces of these disfigured children is truly humbling and uplifting at the same time.

They will also put your day to day troubles into perspective.
.. Dog bless them all.

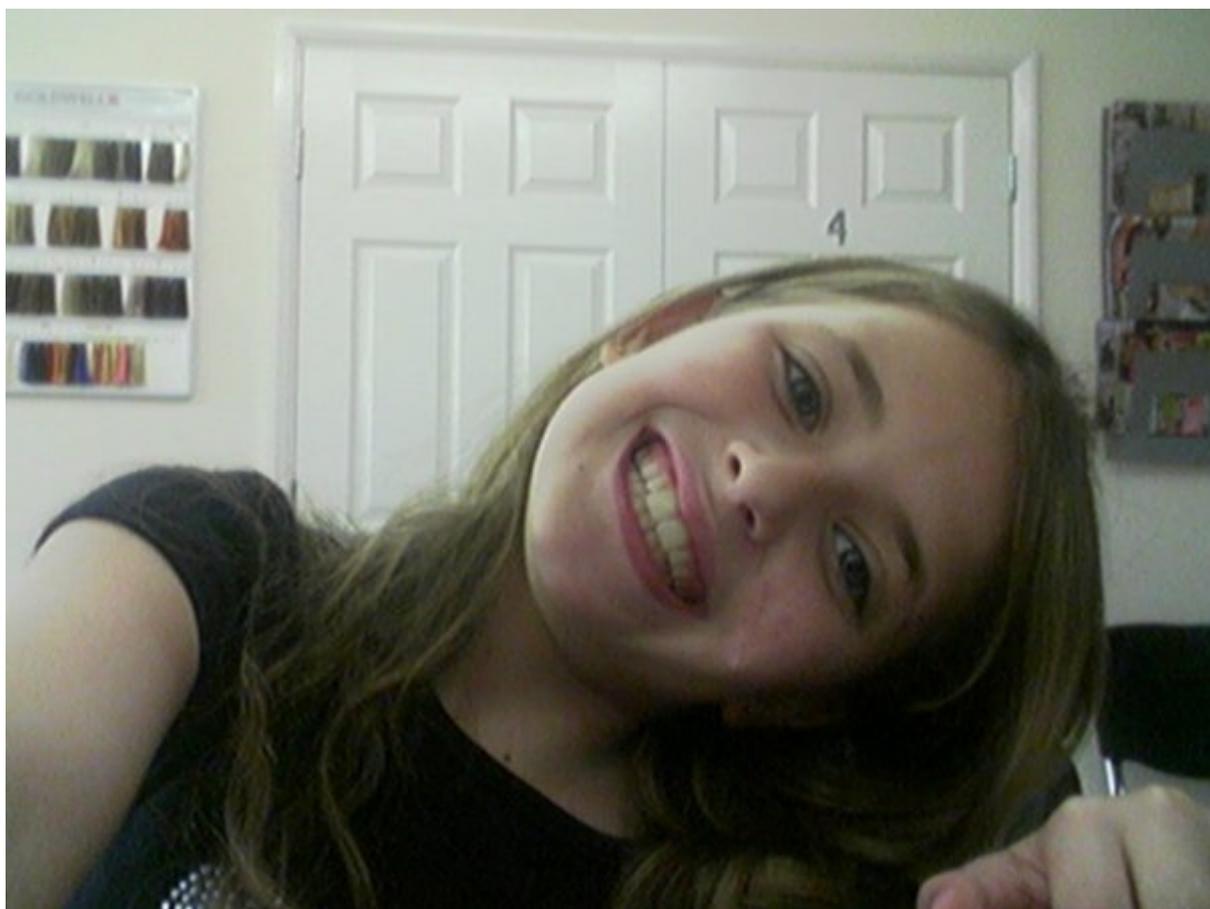


Photo: You would never know it had been there

'I was terrified she'd be asked to play Rudolph in the school play': Mother's relief after surgery to remove her daughter's birthmark is successful

- Connie Lloyd, now five, was born with a bright red birthmark on her nose
- Doctors diagnosed the mark as hemangioma – a benign tumour
- Mother Zara says her daughter was constantly being commented on and would have her nose poked by other children
- Connie has now had the birthmark successfully removed

By [SARAH GRIFFITHS](#)

PUBLISHED: 15:29, 18 December 2013 | **UPDATED:** 15:57, 18 December 2013

Most parents look forward to seeing their child perform in a school Christmas play, but for one mother, it was a source of fear.

Zara Green, whose daughter Connie was born with a bright red birthmark on her nose, said she had dreaded the possibility of her being asked to play Rudolph.

Fortunately, an operation to remove the large red growth was successful.



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Miss Green noticed the birthmark just after Connie was born. At first she assumed it was a pressure mark from the delivery, but after two months the growth had darkened and became lumpy. Miss Green, 27, a former care worker, said: 'When she was a baby I wondered whether the part of Rudolph would always be set aside for Connie in her Christmas plays.'

'I imagined well-meaning teachers and parents asking us year after year whether she would like the part.'

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'Connie would have hated that kind of attention. At pre-school she had to be brave while the other children asked about her

differences.

'Today, I'm left wondering what Connie's school life would have been like if she hadn't had the surgery. Would she have felt comfortable? Would she have found it easy to make friends?'

Miss Green, of Slough, Berkshire, fought for Connie to have surgery to remove the red growth at a young age, despite doctors warning her that Connie would not be eligible for the procedure until she turned ten.



Connie Lloyd, pictured, had an operation to remove a bright red birthmark on his nose. Her mother had been worried that she would be type cast as Rudolph in the school Christmas play, but Connie played a cat and people no longer associate her with a birthmark at all, her mother said

She said: 'We noticed the birthmark just after she was born. At first we assumed it was a pressure mark from the delivery.

'After two weeks, the growth had darkened in colour and had

become lumpy. We were told it was a regular birthmark which would disappear of its own accord eventually.'

Miss Green sought a second opinion at Great Ormond Street children's hospital, where specialists diagnosed the mark as hemangioma – a benign tumour – in and around Connie's nostrils.

Connie was prescribed medication to halt the spread of the growth and a consultant advised that she would be able to undergo surgery to remove it completely when she turned ten years old.

Miss Green said that her daughter told her at 18 months old that she didn't like her nose and she wanted one like her mother's.



Miss Green fought for Connie to have surgery to remove the red growth at a young age, despite doctors warning her that Connie would not be eligible for the procedure until she turned ten

'It was very difficult to hear. As her mother I wanted to do everything I could for her', she said.

Negative reactions at pre-school eventually prompted Miss Green, her partner and Connie's father Tom Lloyd, 26, a mechanic, to pursue options for removing the birthmark.

'Children in Connie's playgroup were curious and sometimes they would prod at her nose. She found it very upsetting,' Miss Green said.

'The school photographer even asked me whether I would like Connie's birthmark airbrushed out of the final class picture. I found it offensive. Connie was who she was, and we loved every bit her of her.

'But I started to think about Connie going through her school years, dealing with those kinds of reactions at every turn.



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Connie in the womb at 32 weeks. After she was born, specialists at Great Ormond Street children's hospital, diagnosed the red mark on her nose as hemangioma – a benign tumour – in and around Connie's nostrils

'We found the charity [Saving Faces](#) who put us in touch with Professor Iain Hutchison. We had a consultation with him

within two weeks of getting in touch. It all happened amazingly quickly.'

Connie was approved for NHS funding worth £2,000 and underwent the surgery in March 2011, shortly before the birth of her little brother Archie, 2.

Connie's nose is continuing to heal but she has not experienced any problems fitting into Reception Class at Stoke Poges Primary School.

Miss Green said Connie is no longer subjected to insensitive reactions and has developed into a lively, confident schoolgirl who enjoys taking selfies.



Miss Green had dreaded the possibility of her five-year-old daughter Connie Lloyd being asked to play Rudolph due to a growth on her nose, which she has now had removed. She said: 'Connie's Christmas play was last week and she played a cat as part of a large group of friends who were also playing cats. People don't associate her with a birthmark at all now.'

'She's developed a huge amount of confidence. The change has been incredible – she's almost a completely different girl. She's not shy in the slightest.

'She has loads of friends and loves going to class.

Miss Green said that while surgery can be daunting for parents but she had to think of Connie's future long-term.

'If I'd had left it to the doctors who suggested we didn't go for surgery, Connie's life would have been completely different.

'I'm so glad we did. We have no regrets at all.

Read

more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2525827/Child-bright-red-nose-spared-playing-Rudolph-school-play-thanks-surgery.html#ixzz2nqjCsolk>

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