

DMIST



▲ AGONY
Daisy (right) tries to eat ice cream with Megan before diagnosis

Daisy can never eat or drink again..but she keeps smiling



▲ BRAVE
Daisy with loving family

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7-YEAR-OLD'S RARE ILLNESS

WATCHING little Daisy Palmer blow out candles on her birthday cake should have been a joyful moment for her parents.

But Damon and Tracy were heartbroken as they knew their seven-year-old would not be able to enjoy a single slice.

Her friends tucked in but Daisy, who cannot digest food, knew the cake would leave her in crippling pain.

"Daisy asked for a cake so she could blow out the candles, even though she knew she wouldn't be able to eat it," says

Tracy, 40. "We can't even give her an ice cream and if we buy her older sister Megan one we make sure she eats it away from her sister as we don't want to upset her. If Daisy tried to eat anything, it would come straight back up again and she'd be left in excruciating pain. It breaks my heart to see her suffer."

Daisy has incurable chronic intestinal pseudo-obstruction (Cip), a mystery blockage which means that she has to be fed through a tube near her heart.

Tracy, who lives with currency trader Damon, 39, Megan, 12, and Daisy, in Langdon Hills, Essex, had

no inkling of her daughter's illness. "She would scream and cry after feeding and regularly throw up her milk. At first we just thought she was a sickly baby.

"But as she got older it got worse. By the time she was four she couldn't eat or drink anything without suffering

from severe constipation or vomiting. I'd give her a ham sandwich and days later she'd throw it up intact. She was just totally unable to keep her food down."

Initially her doctor thought Daisy had reflux and prescribed Gaviscon but in October 2008 she was diagnosed with Cip. "Not a day would

There were times she would pass out from the crippling tummy pain



◀ **STILL SMILING**
Plucky Daisy



▲ **SO SICK** Daisy in hospital in 2009

▶ **TUBES**
Daisy hooked up to hospital machines



go by without Daisy crying and telling me 'I feel sick' or 'my tummy hurts', says Tracy. "Anything she ate would cause a blockage and a couple of hours later she would be clutching her stomach in agony, before being sick.

"She suffered from crippling stomach cramps and would beg me to take the pain away. There were times when she passed out from the pain. We felt completely helpless. We hated seeing her suffer."

Daisy's weight dropped to just over two stone - dangerously underweight for her age - and in January last year she was admitted to hospital. She was fitted with

a Hickman line, an intravenous drip which allowed nutrients to be pumped directly to arteries to her heart. She was allowed home six months later but had to be re-admitted to fit a new tube last November.

Tracy says: "She goes to school for a couple of hours each morning, which she loves. She loves seeing her friends and I often take her and Megan out the cinema or to the park.

But Daisy has to spend 18 hours during the day and night hooked up to the feeding machine in her bedroom, and will do so for the rest of her life. She can only drink a tiny amount of water a day. "She wants to be out playing with her friends but she has

She never feels sorry for herself. She's inspiring with a smile for all

to go to bed at 2.30pm," says Tracy. The family want to raise enough money to build a lift in their home so she can be treated downstairs.

Mealtimes can be especially hard. Tracy says: "It must be torture for her having to watch the rest of us eat, but she's so good about it - she tells us we should go ahead and not to worry about her. She never complains of hunger but she'd love to be able to eat sweets and chocolate.

"Despite everything she never feels sorry for herself. She takes everything in her stride and always has a smile for everyone. She's truly an inspiration."

Damon and Tracy hope a cure will be found but have set up The Daisy Palmer Trust to fund ongoing treatment. For more information visit www.daisypalmertrust