

Dad will die unless bone marrow donor is found

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By Claire Regan

The family of a young Armagh man in desperate need of a bone marrow donor are today making a heartfelt plea for people to come forward to see if they could save his life.

Barry Riding, a 29-year-old from Jonesborough, is clinging to the hope that a bone marrow match can be found to increase his chances of surviving a tumour in his heart.

The engineer was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma in October last year and he endured six gruelling courses of chemotherapy before doctors finally told him he was in remission.

The south Armagh man was overjoyed when his wife Karen gave birth to their daughter Avril in April.

But a month later, the young family received the devastating news that Barry was not in remission, and that he had a tumour in his heart.

His family say a bone marrow transplant is his only hope, and have issued their plea to the Ulster public.

His father, mother, sister and half-sister have already been screened, to no avail, to determine if they could donate.

The Anthony Nolan Trust, a charity which runs the UK's largest bone marrow register, is helping the Riding family find a potential match.

The Trust will host a clinic in Newry Sports Centre, on Patrick Street in the city, from 2-7pm on September 17.

Members of the public are asked to come along to see if they are a match for the young father.

Barry was too ill to speak to the Belfast Telegraph last night, but his aunt Bernie Connelly said the family was "desperately hoping for a match" .

"All of us are completely devastated by this. Barry is such a great person, he's a wee pet," she said.

"Finding a match really is our last hope. We are appealing to anyone who can come to Newry on September 17 to do so."

Supporting the appeal is Belfast doctor John McManus, who was 22 and a medical student in October 2005 when he was found to be a match for a young woman who needed a transplant.

Now a fully qualified doctor, he urged people to come forward.

"Everybody dreams of being able to save someone else's life and this is the most fantastic, yet simple, way to do that," Mr McManus said.

"Donating bone marrow is as simple as giving blood. It is virtually painless, anyone who can tolerate donating blood would have no problem donating bone marrow. It takes around four or five hours to complete the procedure, it really is very simple."

As well as finding a match for Barry, the Anthony Nolan Trust are hoping the appeal will increase the register of potential donors. You must be 18-40, in good health, weigh over eight stone, and not be severely overweight.