



Dad's ride for charity can ease the pain

By Paul Lewis

A DAD has told of his anguish after learning he has passed on the painful genetic disorder he suffers from to his young son.



Tom Baker, who lives in Norton, has pachyonychia congenita, or PC, the generic term for a variety of rare and incurable skin conditions which makes it extremely difficult for him to walk.

Now he is coming to terms with the fact that one of his two sons, 3-year-old Timothy, has also developed the condition — and is waiting to find out whether 10-month Solomon will get it too.

"PC is a generic term for a variety of conditions. I have a specific one and the skin on my feet is too thick," Tom explained.

"It means I cannot walk very far and have to either cycle or drive.

"The skin has to be removed regularly. You can have it done by a chiropodist, but I tend to do it myself with a scalpel.

"The condition is painful. It's like walking on pebbles in your bare feet, all the time.

"I always wear flip-flops. I can walk, but not very far, and it is always uncomfortable. First thing in the morning it is not great, but as long as I don't do anything on my feet, it's okay by mid-morning. But then it gets worse throughout the day, and it's horrible in the evening."

Tom, 32, lives with wife Julie Peconi and their two sons in Glen Road. He said his condition was worsening.

"Now Timothy has got it, and I'm thoroughly depressed about that because he's only 3," he said.

Normal

"He's not too bad at the moment because he does not weigh very much, so there isn't the pressure on his feet.

"With him the skin is splitting quite a lot.

"There are big cracks in his feet and that hurt him.

"He runs around like a normal 3-year-old, but he does sometimes complain about it.

"We have a trampoline in the garden and he does go on it, but he cannot stay there for long.

"My other son, Solomon, is 10 months old. He's just starting to walk.

"There are no signs of it in him, but I don't know if he is going to get it yet. I really hope not, especially as he seems a little more active as well."

Tom and three friends have set out on a 300-mile cycling trip around Wales to raise money for registered charity PC Project UK, which is based at Dundee University.

They are due to return back to Swansea tomorrow.

"The fundraising is going okay, but we are also trying to raise awareness for the charity," said Tom.

"It is funding and helping push more research into PC."

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WEB LINK www.pcprojectuk.org.uk