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Chris finally on the run after swine flu scare

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A PETERSFIELD man is belatedly running the Great South Run this weekend, after being struck down with swine flu and missing the official race date at the end of October.

Chris Jones, of Rival Moor Road, needed a challenge in a bid to get fit, and on hearing that his friend's son had been diagnosed with leukaemia decided to sign up for the 10-mile run in Portsmouth.

But on October 24 – the day before the race – Chris was diagnosed with swine flu.

"I was completely gutted," he said. "And could not believe all the work done to get flu the day before. I had completed more than 250 miles in training.

"I wanted desperately to complete the 10 miles as I had pledged over £700 for Children with Leukaemia. Thanks to friends, family and work colleagues at Christie Intruder Alarms in Waterlooville."

Chris is being joined on his run by Imogen Restell of Denmead, Jenna Fuller of Waterlooville, and Donna Stagg of Hilsea.

"Imogen, Jenna and Donna heard that I had the flu and offered to run with me," said Chris. "When a date could be arranged, Jenna kindly mapped a 10-mile run based on the actual run, with a few extra bits added due to some of the route now being closed to the public.

Chris' run will now take place on Sunday, November 15, starting at 11am from the car park at the Pyramids Centre in Southsea.

"On April the 1st, of all days, I was sitting on the couch late at night with the kids settled and the wife reasonably happy watching the normal dross on TV. I needed a challenge, especially when my Wii keeps reminding me that my Wii fit age is 60!" said Chris.

"I browsed the web and landed on the Bupa Great South Run 10-mile run race page and I thought to myself 'how hard can that be?' and promptly registered. After a five-minute test run I was crawling on the floor!"

Chris continued: "At the time, I thought best not to run for charity just in case I could not make it around the track. However, that changed when my friend Imogen Restell, a friend of mine called me to say her son James (four) was unexpectedly diagnosed with leukaemia."

James has acutelymphoblastic leukaemia which is the most common and least scary type of leukaemia. There is an 80 per cent cure rate in children. The reason that it is possible for his type of leukaemia to be successfully treatable in the current time is because of the funding and expertise that has gone into researching how to control, and eventually eliminate, as many as possible of the leukaemic cells that exist in the bone marrow of patients.

Chris added: "So come down and see me on the day or go to my fundraising page www.bmycharity.com/runforjames. I would like to raise as much sponsorship as possible so that more work can be done to improve the medical profession's knowledge of this and other cancers still further."



Donna, Chris, young James, Imogen and Jenna before the run.