

a cheaper alternative to hands-on healthcare, but it may offer increased choice and control to the right patient, and greater peace of mind to carers.

The types of telecare monitoring most widely used are blood pressure, insulin and heart monitors. These standalone items can be purchased from high street chemists, allowing the patient to be in control and know when to seek help or medication.

More complex systems are used by First Response Paramedics, who may use a compact kit of monitoring equipment to undertake initial patient assessments, including pulse, oxygen levels and blood pressure. This information, along with the patient's history can be forwarded to a hospital via a secure Wi-Fi connection to ensure that the appropriate support is provided and avoid unnecessary admissions.

Telecare equipment can also be used at home for the management of long-term conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes and heart failure. Monitors linked to specialist

nursing teams will alert them to any abnormalities and provide support in a timely manner, thus helping to avoid repeat home visits or unnecessary GP/hospital appointments.

Studies have found that in addition to preventing infection and reducing admissions, telecare can reduce the frequency and duration of essential hospital stays. More significantly, it can lead to measurable improvements in a patient's ability to be self-caring and gain better understanding of their own condition and how to manage it. For more information about the options that may be available to you, ask your nurse specialist or visit www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk.

Claire Miller is an independent occupational therapist and trainer working across the country to promote safety, independence and wellbeing at home, work and leisure. For more information, contact **07930 185 090** or visit www.otandt.co.uk



CASE STUDY

“We’d be lost without it”

Wendy Barton lives with her family just outside the town of Corby in Northamptonshire

In August our son Logan, aged 5 months, had his first seizure, during which he stopped breathing. He was rushed to hospital by ambulance and had to go straight into resus. During an extended hospital stay he underwent a series of tests, but no cause could be found.

Logan then had several more seizures over the next few weeks, all requiring hospitalisation. They became an almost daily occurrence, and we quickly realised they were happening in his sleep. As parents we didn't want him to go through them alone, so we started monitoring him constantly, taking it in shifts overnight.

At first we used a baby monitor with a movement sensor that sat under a mattress, but we began to wonder if a product existed that did the opposite – detect the movements of a seizure, rather than the absence of movement. We researched online, and found that only a few companies manufactured such a device. We opted for EasyLink UK, as it seemed they had the device best suited to our needs – an MP5v2 Epileptic Seizure Movement Monitor.

We purchased the device around two months ago, and since then Logan has been diagnosed with epilepsy resulting from an extremely rare genetic disorder. The Easylink team provided excellent after-sales service, which ensured we got the device set up correctly. It comes out of the box fully assembled – you only have to put the batteries in the pager – and can be set off by movement and/or sound. There's also a delay function, so that normal movements such as rolling over won't set the monitor off.

The sensitivity of the mattress sensor pad can be altered, which was very helpful in our case. Logan's seizures can sometimes consist of a light 'shaking' of one or more limbs, so it was great that it could be set to detect these subtler movements as well as those involving the whole body.

It took a few goes to get the device set up just as we wanted it, but it now works perfectly. Most of all, it allows us as parents to sleep again, as we trust the device to wake us when our son needs us. So far, it has alerted us to two seizures whilst he has been in his cot asleep – we'd be lost without it.

To find out more about the MP5v2 monitor and the other products available from Easylink UK, contact 01536 264 869 or visit www.easylinkuk.co.uk

4 Wrist Worn Fall Detector *Tynetec*

Tynetec's watch-like device is designed to overcome common issues with personal fall detectors, such as bulky, belt-worn form factors and false alarms. It detects changes in the user's height via a pressure sensor and can be discreetly worn on the wrist or belt if desired. It can be set at one of five sensitivity levels, and has an optional auto cancellation feature to inform of false alarms.

Contact: 01670 352 371
www.tynetec.co.uk



5 Lifeline Vi+ *Tunstall*

Designed for home use, the Tunstall's latest version of its Lifeline telecare hub supports a range of different sensors and has an improved battery back-up facility. Features of the Vi+ model include an ambient temperature sensor, an automatic pendant test reminder, a scheduled reminder facility and the ability to record up to six voice messages with a total recording time of 60 seconds.

Contact: 01977 661 234
www.tunstall.co.uk

