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## Antibiotic Awareness at the RUH

Staff at the RUH are emphasising the importance of prescribing antibiotics prudently, in support of European Antibiotic Awareness Day on Friday 18 November.

The campaign is raising awareness amongst healthcare professionals and patients about the importance of taking antibiotics responsibly and putting an end to their unnecessary or inappropriate use. It also alerts people to the fact that over reliance on antibiotics can reduce effectiveness and lead to other complications such as diarrhoea.

Wendy Lloyd, Antibiotic Pharmacist at the RUH, says: "Antibiotics are important medicines used to treat infections caused by bacteria. Bacteria can adapt and find ways to survive the effects of an antibiotic. They become 'antibiotic resistant' so that the antibiotic no longer works.

"We know that the more we use an antibiotic, the more likely it is that bacteria will become resistant. By using antibiotics appropriately at the correct dose and for the correct length of time, we can slow down the development of resistance.

"Antibiotics are life saving medicines, but they need to be used sensibly to ensure they remain effective for treating infections in the future."

Overuse of antibiotics can also increase the risk of healthcare associated infections such as *Clostridium difficile* and MRSA and reducing these infections is a top priority for the RUH.

The hospital has in place extensive guidelines that instruct doctors which antibiotics to prescribe for certain infections and how long the course should be. Compliance with these guidelines is regularly audited and a team of infection specialists are available to give advice for complex cases.

NHS Bath & North East Somerset is also promoting the campaign. Primary care accounts for about 80 per cent of all antibiotic prescriptions.

Dr Pamela Akerman, Director of Public Health, NHS B&NES added: "Antibiotic resistance is an increasingly serious patient safety and public health problem in England. Antibiotics don't work for many colds, coughs, flu or sore throats. The best advice for patients is to rest and drink plenty of fluids."

Everyone, whether they are a healthcare professional or a member of the public, is responsible for ensuring antibiotics remain effective.

**Ends**

**Notes to Editors:**

1. Antibiotics only work on treating bacterial infections and not viral infections, such as coughs and colds.
2. EAAD is an annual event held on 18 November. The European focus this year is on prudent antibiotic prescribing
3. For copies of the campaign materials please visit the Department of Health website using the following link:  
[www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_130267](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_130267)