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HELP US KEEP OUR HEALTH AND CARE SERVICES NOROVIRUS-FREE

An outbreak of norovirus is having an impact on hospitals and other health care settings in Bath and North East Somerset (BaNES). In partnership with local health providers, BaNES Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is urging people who are currently experiencing symptoms of norovirus to stay at home.

It is vital that people who may have norovirus do not visit hospitals, care homes or their GP surgery.

Norovirus is characterised by forceful vomiting and watery diarrhoea. Some people also experience a raised temperature, headaches, painful stomach cramps, and/or aching limbs. Symptoms usually appear one to two days after a person becomes infected but they can start sooner. Most healthy people will make a full recovery within a couple of days.

However, an outbreak of norovirus can have a real impact on hospitals and other care settings. Containing the virus is vitally important to stop it spreading. It is especially important that people with norovirus refrain from visiting a hospital or care home. Visiting a loved one whilst infectious could put them at risk of catching the virus, and could have serious consequences – for them and for other patients or residents.

Dawn Clarke, Director of Nursing and Quality at BaNES CCG said:

“Norovirus is very unpleasant but usually resolves itself in 24 to 48 hours. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to prevent infections occurring in the community. Taking precautions like washing hands thoroughly after contact with potentially contaminated surfaces or with someone who has the infection will help to reduce the spread of norovirus.

“There is no specific cure for the illness and, as it is not a bacterial infection, it cannot be treated with antibiotics. Therefore, people with the illness are advised not to visit their GP but to stay home, to get lots of rest and to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.

“If you are worried about your symptoms then you should call 111 who will be able to advise on the most appropriate course of action and treatment.”

Mary Lewis, Deputy Director of Nursing Quality and Patient Safety at the Royal United Hospital in Bath said:

“Norovirus can lead to the closure of hospital bays and, sometimes, of whole wards – which is why it is essential that the whole community works together to keep health and social care settings virus-free.

“If you have had norovirus, you should ensure that you have been free of symptoms for a full 48 hours before visiting a friend or relative in hospital or attending an outpatient appointment.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. Advice for those with norovirus:

- Don't go to see your GP – norovirus is highly contagious and there's nothing your GP can do while you have it.
- If you or a relative have norovirus and you want further help and advice, you can call the NHS 111 service.
- For more information or advice on norovirus visit:
www.nhs.uk/conditions/Norovirus/Pages/Introduction.aspx

2. Bath and North East Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (BaNES CCG) is responsible for planning, commissioning (buying) and monitoring local health services for the population of Bath and North East Somerset. The CCG is led by local GPs, from all 27 practices in BaNES, who have first-hand experience of what their patients need and understand first-hand how the NHS works.

3. The CCG works closely with local partners including B&NES Council, local NHS providers, patients and the public to manage existing NHS services and implement new services to ensure that high quality health and social care is delivered to the population as close to their home as possible.