

Press Release

Issue date: 12 September 2007

Changes to visiting arrangements at RUH

From Monday 17 September new visiting arrangements are being introduced on wards at the Royal United Hospital (RUH) to help make the hospital cleaner and safer for patients, their relatives and staff.

In a drive to help improve infection control and to give patients more rest time, normal visiting times to all wards will be limited to 2.00-3.30pm and 6-8pm daily, including weekends. There will be exceptions allowed and the new arrangements will not apply to children's wards, maternity units or areas that care for seriously ill patients.

As part of the new visiting arrangements a maximum of two visitors per patient will be allowed at any one time. Children may only visit at the discretion of the patient and ward staff and must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

These measures will enable wards to be cleaned thoroughly and reduce the number of people coming and going, which will help reduce the possible spread of infection. During these visiting hours staff will also be able to make visitors aware of the importance of using hand gel or soap and water to clean their hands on entering and leaving wards.

Posters will be displayed around the hospital to explain the new arrangements and also sent to GPs and health centres.

Francesca Thompson, director of nursing at the RUH says: "We are bringing in these new visiting arrangements to help us tackle the spread of infections and also to improve the privacy and dignity afforded to our patients. Whilst these measures may at first seem restrictive it is important that we focus on the well being and care of all our patients. Having a lot of visitors coming and going on wards can be tiring for patients and can make it difficult for staff to do their jobs effectively. By restricting the numbers of visitors we will ensure that our patients get more rest and in particular

have uninterrupted time to eat their meal which is important for their care and wellbeing. Limiting visiting time in this way will also mean that we can support relatives and carers and encourage them to get some rest too.”

Ward staff will also be providing further information and advice on other aspects of visiting such as the use of mobile phones and bringing in flowers.

To help maintain a quiet atmosphere and privacy for patients, visitors will be asked not to use mobile phones on wards. If however phones need to be kept switched on visitors will be asked to ensure they are turned onto silent mode. No one will be allowed to use cameras on mobile phones in order to preserve other patients’ confidentiality.

Visitors will also be asked not to bring flowers in for patients as these can easily be knocked over and can pose a risk to both medical equipment and infection control.

Francesca Thompson adds: “We do understand that many will be tempted to bring in flowers to cheer up a friend or relative. We know however from talking to patients that they often prefer to receive flowers once at home. It is difficult to manage vases of flowers on a busy ward and patients often leave them behind when they are discharged from the hospital.”

Ends

Issued by RUH communications Office Tel: 01225 82 5849