

Bath and North East Somerset Primary Care Trust

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B&NES people advised how to look after themselves during the winter bug season

People in Bath and North East Somerset were today given tips on how to take care of themselves as diarrhoea and sickness bugs were affecting the community.

Like other large organisations nursing homes and hospitals are particularly vulnerable to outbreaks of diarrhoea and sickness.

Paulton community hospital has now closed to new admissions and Bath Royal United hospital remains closed to new admissions on seven wards and has asked visitors to avoid attending relatives unless really necessary.

Dr Kieran Morgan, Director of Public Health at Bath & North East Somerset PCT said today: "Diarrhoea and sickness is unpleasant but most people do not need medical help or treatment. People affected should make sure that they keep warm, try to keep up their fluids levels and most importantly pay particular attention to their hand hygiene."

NHS Direct website on www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk offers good advice and tips for staying healthy in the winter.

Dr Morgan added: "It is also vital that people stay home from work, schools and other organisations until they are sure they are clear of the virus, we recommend that this should be 48 hours after the last symptoms.

He added: "We strongly advise that people with stomach upsets should not go to hospital emergency departments without first consulting with their own family doctor."

To help control any further spread of infection the hospital has again introduced stringent visiting arrangements to reduce the number of people coming and going on wards. Family and friends are asked not to visit patients unless absolutely necessary, to avoid bringing in children and to ring and check with the ward before planning to come to the hospital.

However, outpatient clinics were still running and patients should attend unless they were unwell.

Francesca Thompson, director of nursing at the RUH said:

" Too many people are coming straight to A&E with symptoms of sickness and diarrhoea without talking to their GP. People must seek alternative advice before coming to hospital so that we can ensure we have the staff and resources to treat those seriously ill patients who really need emergency care or treatment. Given the extra pressure on the hospital we are also working closely with local PCTs to prioritise patients who need medical treatment or surgery. We apologise to anyone whose operation has to be cancelled and will ensure that these patients are seen and treated as soon as possible."

Ends

For further information please contact Julie Hendry, communications manager on 0117 900 2694.