

Press Release

Issue date: 8 January 2008

Tackling D&V

The current outbreak of seasonal diarrhoea and vomiting is widespread in the community and putting additional pressure on hospitals in the area and wider across England.

Despite public health messages patients and visitors are still coming into the RUH with symptoms and this has resulted in additional wards and patients areas being affected. Although one ward had re-opened over the weekend several more wards are now under observation or closed to new admissions. As of this morning nine inpatient wards were affected and this position continues to be reviewed.

Francesca Thompson, director of nursing said: "In order to protect our patients from the infection, we are being very proactive in terms of encouraging staff to report anyone with symptoms at the earliest opportunity and not admitting new patients to affected areas. Whilst this does put pressure on the rest of the hospital we need to take this action to help prevent the infection spreading further. I would like to pay tribute to all our staff for their hard work in dealing with the extra pressures and also to thank those visitors and relatives who have heeded our request not to visit the hospital.

"This is a highly infectious virus that is affecting many communities in England and we are working closely with our primary care colleagues to help prevent people with symptoms from coming into hospitals or local health community facilities. This includes local GPs supporting the RUH by seeing numbers of patients in the emergency department, including those with symptoms of D&V and preventing any unnecessary admissions. We are working closely with and taking advice from the Health Protection Agency given that this is a virus that is widespread in the community."

Ward staff are carrying out strict infection control measures to contain the infection and protect patients. This includes closing wards to new patients, ensuring patient areas are kept clean and encouraging everyone to wash their hands thoroughly on entering and leaving wards.

In order to try and contain the virus the hospital is also reminding the public not to visit patients in the hospital unless absolutely necessary and to telephone the ward in advance. No one should visit the hospital if they have recently been unwell as they may be infectious for 48 hours or more after recovering.

Outpatient clinics are running as normal though some routine operations are being cancelled.

Ends

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