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PRESS RELEASE

***Celebrity Doctor Endorses Hospital's 'United in Hand Hygiene' Campaign
(See attached picture of Dr.Jones with staff from the Surgical Admissions Unit. From left
Staff Nurse Anita Eddy, Jnr Sister Pam Randle, Dr.Jones and Student Nurse***

Dr. Hilary Jones has helped launch a new campaign to raise awareness about keeping infections out of the Royal United Hospital Bath. The celebrity GP and television presenter, Dr Hilary Jones, visited the trust on Wednesday 23rd April.

His visit was part of a week long series of events at the RUH to launch wide ranging schemes designed to reduce infections which are brought into the hospital from outside and to ensure that the trust's infection control procedures are being correctly followed by all staff.

Throughout the week visitors, patients and staff were given opportunities to see 'bugs' on their hands, not visible to the naked eye; to give their opinion on new cleaning products for the hospital and see what infections can be carried on unwashed hands.

A series of large bold posters have been put up throughout the hospital advising people about the risks of bringing infections into the trust.

A magazine style booklet, talking about the various types of infection, and giving more information about the work of the hospital's specialist Infection Control Team will also be going out to several public areas such as libraries, GP surgeries, council offices etc.

Francesca Thompson, the hospital's Director of Nursing said,

"As a hospital and part of a community we have made tremendous progress over the last year. This campaign is about taking our achievements even further and being united in our efforts. The washing of hands remains the single most important contribution that everyone can make to reach our goal in reducing infections."

Dr Jones has recently spoken on national radio about the importance of not bringing infection into hospitals and steps that the public can take to minimise the risks of doing so. He enjoyed a wide ranging tour of the hospital site and spoke with both staff and patients . He said

"I'm delighted to be involved in the on-going work that the RUH is doing in the vital battle to overcome the problem of hospital infections. However committed the staff are, we desperately need the public – who after all, are potential in-patients themselves – to fully understand how these bugs are transmitted and what they can do as individuals to help. It's all about team-work and I'm proud to be part of that team".

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Editors notes:

Good hand hygiene is the single most important action to prevent spread of infection control

Right handed people tend to wash their left hand more than their right and visa versa

We have between 2 & 10 million bacteria between our fingertips and elbows

Damp hands spread 1,000 times more germs than dry hands, so it's important to dry them properly

Germs can stay alive on unwashed hands for up to 3 hours

Up to half of men and quarter of women don't wash their hands after going to the toilet. Where other people are in a public bathroom as witnesses both men & women are more likely to wash their hands

The average person touches their face (eyes, nostrils and lips), 26 times per hour – the main entry sites for germs and other bacteria which cause diarrhoea and respiratory illnesses..

Millions of germs hide under watches and bracelets and there are about as many germs under your ring as there are people in Europe!

90% of germs on hands are under nails! keep them well trimmed.

- *Clostridium difficile* is an infection caused by bacteria and produces spores that can live in the environment for a long time. The bacteria are shed in faeces and touching even the smallest amount of infected faeces and then touching your mouth can cause illness. It is spread from person to person through poor hygiene, not washing hands after using the toilet or handling certain raw foods, touching surfaces infected by the bacteria – again often from poor hand hygiene.
The risk of spreading CDif can be minimised by thoroughly washing hands with soap and warm water after visiting the toilet, changing a nappy, before and after preparing food and before visiting patients in hospital.
- *Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureas (MRSA)*. They are resistant to methicillin, a type of penicillin and often to some other types of antibiotics which are used to treat staphylococcus aureas. In general, healthy people are at very low risk of being infected by MRSA but as carriers, they can transfer it to those more vulnerable – such as poorly patients. Again it is most commonly spread by hands and equipment and providing hands are not actually soiled, rubbing with the alcohol gels provided on all hospital wards, before and after visiting a patient will help reduce the risk significantly.
- *Types of Norovirus* – symptoms include vomiting, diarrhoea, headaches – can be spread to a patient if they are visited by someone who already has the infection or has not been clear of it for at least 3 days before visiting. Staying away from the hospital if you are infected is advised and again staying away will also reduce risk to a healthy visitor if someone in the hospital is already suffering

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