

11 November 2014

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Media Release

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Help keep the RUH norovirus-free this winter

Norovirus – also known as the winter vomiting bug – has arrived earlier than usual this year and the RUH is appealing to the public for their support in helping to keep the hospital norovirus-free.

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 the hospital and its more vulnerable patients. Containing the virus is vitally important to stop it spreading. It is especially important that visitors with norovirus refrain from visiting the hospital. 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 on the ward.

Yvonne Pritchard, Senior Infection Control Nurse at the RUH says:

“Norovirus can lead to the closure of hospital bays and, sometimes, of whole wards – which is why it is essential that the RUH and the local community work together to keep our wards 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 at the RUH, or attending an outpatient appointment at the hospital.”

Prevention is always better than cure and, in the case of norovirus, the best method of prevention is to wash hands thoroughly after contact with potentially contaminated surfaces and, where possible, to avoid contact with those who are exhibiting symptoms.

There's no specific cure for the illness and, as it is viral and not caused by an infection, it cannot be treated with antibiotics. Therefore, people with the illness are advised not to visit their GP or the Urgent Care Centre at the RUH. The advice for sufferers is to stay home, to get lots of rest, and to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.

If a person is worried about their symptoms, they should call 111 who will be able to advise on the most appropriate course of action and treatment.

Ends

Notes to the editor:

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.



www.Twitter.com/RUHBath

- 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