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## **Media Release**

### **RUH Trust joins UK research into antibiotic use**

The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust is joining a national research programme, beginning on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2019, which aims to look at ways of reducing the use of antibiotics and the growing threat of multi-drug resistant superbugs.

This supports the NHS 10-year plan published on 7<sup>th</sup> Jan 2019 which places antimicrobial resistance as one of its top five priorities for prevention of disease.

<https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/online-version/chapter-2-more-nhs-action-on-prevention-and-health-inequalities/antimicrobial-resistance/>

The Antibiotic Review Kit (ARK) is a package of measures to help doctors, nurses, pharmacists and patients stop using antibiotics in hospital when they are no longer needed.

ARK member Dr Belen Espina said, “Antibiotics are essential to treat serious infections caused by bacteria. Unfortunately, the more bacteria are exposed to antibiotics, the more likely they are to become resistant”.

“Antibiotics increase the risk of resistance not only in bacteria causing disease but in all bacteria including ‘friendly’ gut bacteria. Stopping antibiotics when they aren’t needed reduces the risk of resistance”



“However, stopping antibiotics when they are no longer needed doesn’t always happen. Sometimes antibiotics are prescribed ‘just in case’ of infection, or because we think ‘it’s better to be safe than sorry’. There is little evidence to support the old dogma that antibiotic courses must be completed to avoid resistance and taking more antibiotics than really needed is not a safe strategy for the future.”

As well as enrolling hospital staff to the project, the ARK team are encouraging those patients on antibiotics to ask their doctor to review their antibiotics regularly. Messages will be posted across the RUH site and at primary care services like GP surgeries to remind the public that overusing antibiotics leads to bacterial resistance.

Dr Espina said: “The ARK Programme will empower prescribers to stop antibiotics if infection is unlikely by the third day of a patient’s admission to hospital. The ARK research campaign estimates that up to 30% of antibiotics could be stopped after 72 hours.”

The RUH is one of 33 NHS Trusts taking part in the ARK Programme clinical study, which began in April 2017. ARK is an independent research programme funded by the National Institute for Health Research. You can find more information [here](#)

The RUH Trust ARK team are: Jane Liu, Consultant Microbiologist

Dr Belen Espina, Consultant Physician

Mandy Slatter, Pharmacist

## Ends

### Notes to Editor:

- The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust provides acute treatment and care for a catchment population of around 500,000 people in Bath, and the surrounding towns and villages in North East Somerset and Western Wiltshire. The hospital provides healthcare to the population served by four Clinical Commissioning Groups: Bath & North East Somerset CCG, Wiltshire CCG, Somerset CCG and South Gloucestershire CCG.
- The Trust provides 759 beds and a comprehensive range of acute services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.



- In 2015 The Royal United Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust acquired the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (RNHRD) NHS Foundation Trust. The RNHRD treats patients from across the country offering services in rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME, cancer related fatigue and fatigue linked to other long term conditions such as multiple sclerosis.
- The RUH is changing - we have an exciting programme of redevelopment underway transforming our site and further improving the services we provide. The Trust is now building a purpose-built RNHRD and Therapies Centre and working towards new Dyson Cancer Centre. For more details visit: [www.ruh.nhs.uk/about/fit\\_for\\_the\\_future](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk/about/fit_for_the_future)
- For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: [www.ruh.nhs.uk](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk)

