

PRESS RELEASE

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Have Norovirus symptoms? Stay at home advises Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group is urging people who have symptoms of the winter vomiting bug Norovirus, which is extremely contagious and spreads rapidly, to stay at home and call NHS 111 for advice.

When Norovirus affects patients in hospitals, wards are often closed to visitors to stop spread within the hospital, but we know that norovirus can sometimes inadvertently be brought into hospitals from the community by visitors.

“Hospitals work incredibly hard to ensure that bugs can’t spread from patient to patient, or ward to ward,” says Dina McAlpine, Director of Nursing and Quality at NHS Wiltshire CCG. “But all these efforts can be undone by someone who comes into hospitals as a visitor while they are still carrying a bug such as Norovirus, so please don’t visit a hospital until you have been free of symptoms for at least 48 hours.”

“An attack of norovirus is unpleasant for anyone, but if you’re already ill, elderly or otherwise vulnerable – as people in hospitals and care homes generally are – catching the virus can be more serious”, added Dr Richard Sandford-Hill, a GP from Market Lavington Surgery and Clinical Chair for Wiltshire CCG.

Norovirus is characterised by projectile 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.

The advice from NHS Wiltshire CCG is:

- Stay at home; do not visit your GP surgery or local A&E unit. Most people will feel better within a day or two but it is easy to get dehydrated, so it is important to drink plenty of fluids to prevent this.

- Avoid visiting hospitals and care homes for at least 48 hours after your symptoms stop. During this period there is still a chance that you could spread the bug around, even if you feel fine.
- Don't send children to school, nursery or playgroup with norovirus symptoms.
 - o Keep them at home for a full 48 hours after symptoms stop.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and regularly at all times, but particularly after toilet visits and before eating.
- Do not handle or prepare food for other people until you have been symptom free for a minimum of 48 hours.
- Do not attend social gatherings until you have been free of all symptoms for at least 48 hours.
- Make sure that any surface that is contaminated by vomit or faeces is promptly and thoroughly disinfected after an episode of illness.
- If you have bloody diarrhoea (blood in your stools), phone your doctor or NHS 111 urgently for advice.

ENDS

Notes for Editors:

- NHS Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is the commissioner of health care services for the population of Wiltshire. The CCG is led by local GPs who have first-hand experience of what their patients need.
- The CCG consists of 49 GP member practices and works closely with local partners including Wiltshire Council, local NHS providers, patients and the public to manage existing NHS services and implement new services to ensure that high quality health and social care is delivered to the population as close to their home as possible. Further information can be found on the website www.wiltshireccg.nhs.uk

Further information:

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