

2 June 2010

## **BGH CONTINUES TO BE AFFECTED BY PATIENTS WITH NOROVIRUS**

Borders General Hospital is continuing to receive patients who are suffering with Norovirus, the gastrointestinal virus.

Visitors should not go to the BGH or any other healthcare facility if they or other members of their family have had symptoms of diarrhoea or vomiting within the past 48 hours.

Those affected are suffering the standard symptoms associated with the virus and no patients are giving cause for concern. However as part of ongoing control measures two wards have been closed to new admissions.

Sheena Wright, Director of Nursing and Midwifery for NHS Borders said: "The healthcare of our staff and patients is our main concern. NHS Borders has rigorous control measures in place to manage any outbreaks within our hospitals. Our staff and the infection control team maintain a clean environment and encourage good hygiene among staff, visitors and patients.

"Staff are working with the Infection Control Team to contain the current outbreak areas. As well as emphasising the importance of strict hand hygiene to anyone who must visit these wards, admissions to these areas have been, where necessary, restricted and staff movement is minimised."

NHS Borders has put in place a number of control measures to manage the situation:

- Visitors should not go to the BGH or any other healthcare facility if they or other members of their family have had symptoms of diarrhoea or vomiting within the past 48 hours.
- Children should not be brought to the BGH to visit patients
- If visitors must visit the BGH, they will be limited to one visitor per patient.
- Visitors should consider postponing their visits to friends or relatives in the BGH over the next few days.
- Visitors should not move around the hospital and should only go to the area they need to visit.
- Strict hand hygiene and hand-washing for all visitors who must visit these wards is essential as this minimises the risk of catching Norovirus.

**Ends**

### **Contacts**

For further information, contact Public Involvement & Communications NHS Borders on 01896 825589

**Notes to editors:**

Outbreaks of Norovirus (NV) infection are reported frequently. Most outbreaks occur in closed or semi-closed communities, especially hospitals, nursing homes and leisure industry settings.

The most common symptom is vomiting. Other symptoms include:

- Nausea (feeling sick)
- Diarrhoea
- Headache
- Fever
- Muscle aches

The illness is generally mild and short lived, (12-72 hours) though people with long term medical conditions may develop more serious symptoms.

NV is highly infectious. Only small amounts of virus are needed to cause infection by the following routes

- a) Breathing in the Virus
- b) Hand to Mouth Contact
- c) Contaminated Food and Utensils
- d) Direct Person to Person

Careful handwashing with warm water, liquid soap and individual towels is the most important control measure

Norovirus is being reported widely in NHS Scotland at the present time, and health authorities are appealing to the public not come to hospitals to visit if they have symptoms of diarrhoea or vomiting within the past 48 hours.