

Media Information

For immediate use



15 December 2011

NHS Borders is being 'Norovirus' prepared

NHS Borders is planning ahead to help minimise the risk of a Norovirus outbreak in its facilities – and is asking the public to help.

The winter period is associated with an increase in Norovirus – often called 'winter vomiting bug'. Common symptoms are diarrhoea and/or vomiting generally lasting for 12-72 hours. Other symptoms can include headache, fever and muscle aches. Anyone can get the infection but the very young and old can suffer most.

Outbreaks of Norovirus can start abruptly and spread quickly in hospitals, but action by patients, visitors and staff can help minimise the impact.

Senior Infection Control Nurse at the Borders General Hospital, Adam Wood said: "It is important that anyone who has had diarrhoea or vomiting should avoid visiting people in care homes or hospitals until they have been free from symptoms for at least 48 hours as they still may be infectious.

"Patients and visitors can also help by hand washing such as before eating, after using the toilet and before and after visiting a hospital ward.

"Although ordinary alcohol hand sanitisers may not be effective against Norovirus, they should still be used as they are very effective against other infectious disease."

Treatment in most cases requires drinking more fluids than usual but some people may wish to seek further advice. NHS24 provides comprehensive up-to-date health information and self care advice for people in Scotland (Contact 08454 24 24 24 www.nhs24.co.uk). Alternatively members of the public may wish to contact their local health clinic or GP.

Contacts:

For further information, contact Public Involvement & Communications on 01896 825589 or 825520