

16 March 2010

NHS Borders Norovirus Update

Dr Ross Cameron, Medical Director said, "While the number of patients suffering from Norovirus at the Borders General Hospital has reduced, the virus is still very active in the community and can spread quickly."

This ongoing situation is not unique to the Borders but is continuing nationally. The outbreaks are not limited to hospitals, but are also prevalent in the community setting.

Because Norovirus can be spread very easily, and to try and reduce the number of people who catch Norovirus while they are in hospital, we would ask visitors to please stay away if they have had any of the symptoms in the previous 48 hours. The most common symptom is vomiting, but may also include diarrhoea, headache, fever and muscle aches.

- Visitors should not go to the BGH or any other healthcare facility if they have had symptoms of diarrhea 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 or spreading Norovirus.

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. Many people still call it 'Winter Vomiting Disease' although it can occur at any time of year.

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.

Contacts

For further information, contact Public Involvement & Communications NHS Borders on 01896 825589/5520

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 hand washing with warm water, liquid soap and individual towels is the most important control measure

Norovirus, or as its known winter vomiting bug, 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 had symptoms of diarrhoea or vomiting within the past 48 hours.

For further information visit:

http://www.nhs24.com/content/default.asp?page=s5_4&articleID=1728§ionID=32