

11 January 2012

Media Release

JPUH plea to patients as pressure mounts on Trust

James Paget University Hospitals remains under increasing pressure from emergency attendances and a rise in the number of patients with Norovirus.

Patients coming into A&E are experiencing longer waiting times for assessment and admissions into hospital are also being delayed. Therefore, in order to alleviate some of the pressures on our services, we would urge anyone who needs medical treatment for minor injury and illness not to automatically come to A&E but consider all the other healthcare options.

Three wards are currently closed as a result of Norovirus and the number of cases coming into the hospital has increased in recent days. Ward closures are part of our strict infection control measures. The seasonal increase in Norovirus and the closure of wards has added to the pressures we are currently facing.

Elective surgery has again been affected and unfortunately, this has resulted in some patients having their treatment postponed. Individual patients are being contacted when necessary and advised that their surgery will be rescheduled as soon as possible.

We urge anyone with symptoms of sickness and diarrhoea, not to visit patients at the hospital until their illness has passed. (At least 48 hours clear)

Visitors must observe the following requirements:

- Wash hands with soap and water as you enter and before you leave a ward
- Only visit one ward
- Only visit a ward if you consider it necessary
- Do not sit on the beds
- Two visitors per patient only
- Do not consume food or drink whilst visiting a ward

If you feel you have to visit and you have vomiting and diarrhoea, contact the Infection Control Team on 01493 452836 and they will take appropriate measures.

If you are ill at home with these symptoms and require medical care, please contact your GP, rather than come straight to A&E.

Director of Nursing, Carole Crocker said: "It is regrettable that some routine elective surgery has again been affected and we sincerely apologise for the inconvenience this might cause for some patients, especially those who have had a previous cancellation."

"A high level of illness within the local community has led to increased demand on the hospital and some patients have conditions which require them to stay in hospital for longer. This has led to a fall in the number of discharges from the Trust and placed extra demand on our resources. We do not take the decision to cancel surgery lightly, but the level of demand has unfortunately led us to take this step."

For further information please contact:

Jonathan Dack, Communications and Media Officer, on 01493 452269

Email: jonathan.dack@jpaget.nhs.uk

Ann Filby, Head of Communications, Engagement & Foundation, on 01493 452162

Email: ann.filby@jpaget.nhs.uk