

Press Release
Don't let "winter vomiting" spoil Christmas



6th December 2010

Don't let winter vomiting spoil the Christmas festivities, for you or for others. That's the message from Bury Local Involvement Network (LiNK) as the continuing cold spell increases the risk of bugs such as the norovirus spreading in the community.

Norovirus infection, commonly known as winter vomiting, is a highly infectious but short-lived illness from which most people, including the frail elderly, will normally recover in anything from 12 to 60 hours without treatment.

It is the most common form of gastrointestinal illness in the UK, affecting between 600,000 and one million people every year. It can spread rapidly, particularly in environments where people live or work in close proximity, such as hospitals, residential care homes, cruise ships, schools and the workplace.

There is no specific treatment for norovirus infection, and therefore people with the infection are advised to stay at home, ensure they get plenty of rest and take plenty of drinks to replace lost fluids.

People suffering from norovirus infection are advised to stay away from their GP surgery or A&E department, as there is no treatment they can give, and there is a chance of passing the infection on to more vulnerable people. If the symptoms persist or appear to be getting worse, ask for a telephone consultation with your family doctor.

The Health Protection Agency, an independent organisation set up to protect the public from health threats, has issued the following advice for norovirus patients:

- Do not visit your GP surgery or hospital A and E unit. There is no treatment they can give you and you will risk infecting other vulnerable people.
- If symptoms persist, ask for a telephone consultation with your family doctor.
- Do not visit friends or relatives in hospitals or in residential care homes.
- Stay away from work or school until you have fully recovered and been free of symptoms for 48 hours
- Wash hands thoroughly and regularly at all times, but particularly after visiting the lavatory and before eating.
- Do not handle or prepare food for other people until you have been free of symptoms for at least 48 hours.

Bury LiNK Chairman, Paul Mainwaring asks that local people look out for others, "At any time of year, it can be hard living alone, and at this time of year, and with the current weather conditions it is even harder. We would ask people to look out for older, vulnerable and disabled people to ensure they have all the supplies they need to get through the cold spell."

ENDS

For further information, please contact Bury Local Involvement Network on 0161 253 6300