

Thursday 9 April 2020

Parents and carers urged not to put off seeking medical help amid anxieties about coronavirus

Parents, carers and others looking after children across Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire are being advised not to let worries about coronavirus delay them from seeking medical help this Easter.

Health leaders are offering reassurance that while services remain extremely busy, parents should not think twice about using urgent and emergency healthcare services when their child becomes ill or has a serious accident.

The advice is also extended to adults – particularly those who are elderly – who may be in need of urgent medical attention.

Gill May, Director of Nursing and Quality, Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group, said: “The current advice to stay at home is massively important and something we all need to be following, but we want to be clear that no parent should put off seeking help for their little one if they need urgent care.

“Although we are all spending more time indoors, accidents still happen and children still become ill – just as they did before the coronavirus outbreak.

“Children usually bounce back from minor illness and minor injuries quickly, but for those times when it could be something more serious, please act quickly – as you usually would – to avoid the situation worsening.”

The Great Western Hospital in Swindon, the Royal United Hospital in Bath and Salisbury District Hospital each have a round-the-clock Emergency Department, all of which remain open as usual for the most serious health concerns, such as broken bones, heavy bleeding and loss of consciousness.

This will not change over the Easter weekend and, in addition, GP surgeries will also be open according to their usual working hours.

During the lockdown, Bath mum Rosie Attwater took her three-year-old daughter to the Emergency Department at the RUH after a nasty fall onto the family’s living room coffee table resulted in a potentially serious head wound.

The family were triaged on arrival and seen by a paediatric nurse who was able to glue the wound and stem the bleeding.

After only an hour at the hospital, Rosie was able to take her daughter home, where she quickly returned to being a happy, healthy and playful pre-schooler.

Dr Nick West, Consultant Paediatrician at the Great Western Hospital, said:
“Situations such as these show just how important it is to seek help quickly.

“A serious bump or cut to the head is always a cause for concern and, in this case, there was also significant bleeding.

“Going to hospital immediately was the right thing to do as it meant the family received swift medical attention and a more serious outcome was averted.

“It’s also really important that families seek advice if their child has a fever and they appear very unwell.

“We would want to see any baby under three months with a fever more than 38 degrees, regardless of the underlying cause.”

People with concerns about the health of a baby, child or adult, should use the NHS 111 service, either online or by telephone.

Additionally, parents and carers in Bath and North East Somerset and Wiltshire can seek help through the free, downloadable HANDi App, which provides expert advice on how to manage common childhood illnesses direct to smartphones, tablets and other mobile devices.

The NHS-endorsed Healthier Together website is also a useful child health advice tool and can be accessed by visiting www.what0-18.nhs.uk.

Notes to editors

- GP surgeries in Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire will be open on Good Friday (10 April) and Easter Monday (13 April) this year as part of measures across the region put in place to help tackle the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.
- Although opening hours will differ across the area, most GP surgeries will remain open as usual on Good Friday and Easter Monday and patients will be able to book online or telephone appointments with GPs in the usual way.
- Some pharmacies across the area will also be open with staff on hand to deal with prescriptions, and details of locations and times will be published in the coming days.
- Details of Easter healthcare services can be found online at www.bswccg.nhs.uk