

16 June 2011

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Media Release

Men urged not to ignore prostate cancer warning signs

Men over 50 are being warned not to ignore the signs of prostate cancer, with the Royal United Hospital in Bath reporting a year on year rise in cases.

Ahead of Prostate Cancer Awareness Day on Saturday 18 June, the RUH has revealed it diagnosed 350 cases of prostate cancer last year, 20 more than in 2009.

The hospital's urology team has two Macmillan uro-oncology nurse specialists who provide specialist nursing support and care to patients and their families.

Miranda Benney, one of the nurse specialists, says: "We are seeing a steady increase in the numbers of men with prostate cancer. We think this is because people are living longer, and also because there is better awareness.

"The signs to look out for in men aged over 50 – particularly those with a family history of prostate cancer – are problems starting urinating, frequently needing to go to the toilet, and difficulty emptying the bladder fully.

"If you have these signs you should go to your GP. Once you are referred to the RUH we will carry out tests and examinations and take it from there. Early detection of prostate cancer is vital to increase the chances of treatment being successful."

The RUH is one of the few hospitals in the UK which offers all treatments for prostate cancer on one site.

These include radiotherapy, brachytherapy (implantation of radioactive seeds), laparoscopic radical prostatectomy (an innovative key-hole surgery technique with significantly less side effects than with more invasive surgery) and surgery for the removal of the prostate.

One of those who has undergone treatment at the RUH is HGV driver Kevin Pike, aged 51, from Shepton Mallet, who discovered he had prostate cancer after going for a work medical just after his 50th birthday.

He later underwent keyhole surgery to remove his prostate and is now attending six-monthly check ups at the hospital.

Kevin says: "I thought there was nothing to worry about but when I was told I had cancer you could have knocked me down with a feather.

“I realised I was one of the lucky ones who managed to find out I had it early on. The care I received at the RUH was exceptional and they made me feel very special.

“A lot of men don’t go to the doctor, but my advice is if you have any of the symptoms you should go. It is nothing to be ashamed of, or embarrassed about, and going to your GP could save your life.”

Nationally there are about 39,000 new cases of prostate cancer a year with around 10,000 men dying from it annually.

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