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Media Release

RUH helps women get quicker answers with new womb cancer test

Women who have bleeding after the menopause will be able to get clearer answers sooner, thanks to a new test being introduced at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust.

The RUH is one of the first hospitals in England to launch the WID-easy test for women referred with post-menopausal bleeding or bleeding on hormone replacement therapy (HRT). The test helps clinical teams quickly understand whether someone is at high or low risk of womb cancer, so they can plan the right next steps.

Bleeding after the menopause is not usually caused by cancer, but it should always be checked. Womb cancer, also called endometrial cancer, is the most common gynaecological cancer. The RUH receives around 250 - 300 suspected cancer referrals every month for symptoms linked to post-menopausal bleeding and unscheduled bleeding on HRT.

Consultant Gynaecologist Dr Laura Atherton said: "This is a vital step forward for our patients. We know that being referred for cancer investigations is an incredibly worrying time. This test changes that by helping us quickly identify low-risk patients.

"For most women, it means avoiding procedures they simply do not need. For those flagged as higher risk, it means we can arrange further tests quickly and start treatment as early as possible if cancer is found."

The WID-easy test uses a swab taken from the vagina and cervix like a smear test. The sample is then sent to a laboratory for rapid testing.

The result shows whether a patient is at low or high risk of womb cancer. People who receive a low-risk result can safely opt for monitoring instead of immediate hospital investigations. If a high-risk result is turned, further tests and treatment can be arranged quickly.

“This is an exciting development for women’s health. Faster testing means many women could receive reassurance sooner, while ensuring those who need further investigations can be prioritised without delay,” added Dr Atherton.

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Notes to Editor:

At the RUH we're proud to put people at the heart of what we do, striving to create an environment where everyone matters. Everyone means the people we care for, the people we work with and the people in our community.

We provide a wide range of services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.

We also provide specialist services for rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME via the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases which we acquired in 2015.

In 2021, we acquired Sulis Hospital Bath, an independent hospital that provides care for both private and NHS patients. This has enabled us to provide more care for NHS patients, as well as continuing to provide private care to those who choose it. Any additional income earned through private care is reinvested in services for the benefit of the people we care for at both Sulis and the RUH.

Our new Dyson Cancer Centre brings together many of the RUH's cancer services under one roof to provide a cancer services hub for over 500,000 people in the South West. The centre includes the RUH's oncology, chemotherapy and radiotherapy services, a 22-bed inpatient ward, a dedicated pharmacy, research team and nuclear medicine and physics teams.

A key feature of the new centre is the Macmillan Wellbeing Hub. The three-storey hub provides a welcoming, non-clinical space designed around the needs of patients and their families. It also includes comfortable accommodation where relatives and loved ones can stay overnight.

We work closely with other health and care organisations as members of the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board. We strive to improve the health and wellbeing of the people in our community by working together build one of the healthiest places to live and work.

We are rated 'Good' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk