Press release – issued 10 May 2016
2016-39

Nurses warn of skin cancer cases rising

As the weather warms up, the dermatology specialist nurses at Hereford County Hospital are warning people about cases of skin cancer, which are on the rise nationally.

More than 100,000 people are diagnosed with skin cancer in the UK each year and more than 1,500 of these cases were diagnosed by specialists at Hereford County Hospital’s dermatology department in the last 12 months.

Malignant Melanoma, the most deadly form of the disease, is the fastest rising common cancer and causes over 2,000 deaths in the UK each year.

That’s why, the dermatology skin cancer specialist nursing team at Wye Valley NHS Trust, held a Sun Awareness Week event at Hereford County Hospital this week.

The team promoted awareness of skin cancer and sun protection, the types of skin cancer and how people can still enjoy the sun, but need to protect themselves from its harmful rays.

Pauline Featonby, lead dermatology clinical nurse specialist at Wye Valley NHS Trust, said: “It is concerning to see that skin cancer is nationally becoming much more common. Early detection of a skin cancer can help reduce excessive scarring and save lives, by taking simple measures to protect your skin and your families, which can help reduce/prevent skin cancers occurring.

“We want people to enjoy the sunny weather but be mindful of the damage too much sun exposure can cause. It is not just sunbathing that damages your skin all types of outdoor activities contribute to the damage that can be caused by the sun.

“It’s so important that men and women take extra care in the sun with their sun exposed areas. We are also urging people who work outdoors in the county, such as farmers, postmen and builders, as well as people who play sports outdoors, to take extra care.

“Try to stay in the shade between 11am and 3pm, if possible, remember to cover up sun exposed areas with light clothing and wear a hat. Apply sun cream with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least factor 30 that blocks UVB and also has UVA protection (a star rating of 4 stars or more - check the back of the bottle), and apply every two hours”.

Dr Dominic Horne, GP and Clinical Vice Chair of Hereford Clinical Commissioning group said: “We’re urging everyone to stay safe in the sun, but extra care should be taken by parents and carers to protect babies and children from the sun’s rays and apply suitable high-factor sunscreen.

“If you notice any changes to moles, such as size, shape, colour, texture, itchiness, development of a new mole or other growth, particularly if it feels hard; any mole or other growth that spontaneously bleeds or requires a dressing, it is important to see your GP.

Continued…
"Most cases of skin cancer are curable if detected early enough, so our advice is to check your skin regularly, stay out of the mid-day sun, wear UV sun protection cream, and go to your GP straight away if you notice any changes to skin or moles”.

**Photograph**
Left to right: Pauline Featonby - lead dermatology clinical nurse specialist, and Sophie Davis – Macmillan skin cancer support worker standing under a sun umbrella.

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**Ends**

**Notes to Editors WVT:**

- Wye Valley NHS Trust is the provider health services across Herefordshire and beyond. The Trust exists to improve the wellbeing, independence and health of the people we serve. We are the leading provider of health care in Herefordshire.
- By working closely with our partners, we can make good our promise to deliver a quality of care we would want for ourselves, our families and our friends.
- With an estimated annual turnover of around £180 million, we employ around 2,700 plus staff. We aim to build new relationships between our staff, patients, service users and their carers with the wider community.

For further information please contact:

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