

NEW KIDNEY STONE TREATMENT READY FOR INCREASE

CUTTING EDGE facilities have been unveiled at Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust to successfully treat an increase in cases of kidney stones and related conditions. The latest addition to handle the above average patient increase is a precision laser, which adds to the key-hole surgery and other innovative techniques offered by the skilled Urology team.

Dorset has a higher incidence rate of kidney stones than the national average, which clinicians believe could be caused by the ready availability of fresh red meat consumed in the area. Responding to this incidence rate, the team is expertly able to diagnose and treat a range of elementary and extreme kidney, ureteric and bladder ailments. The medical staff are equally active preventing the risk of kidney stones - advising the community to avoid becoming high risk by increasing water intake and maintaining a balanced diet.

Capability at the unit has been continually developed – treatments now range from ultrasonic waves to fragment stones to delicate key-hole surgery for removing problematic build-ups. The new addition – the holmium laser will fragment very tough stones and treat superficial urinary tract transitional cell carcinoma.

The use of lasers to treat these types of stones is at the forefront of medical thinking. The multipurpose laser system is an innovative surgical tool used by leading US urologists to successfully treat urinary stone diseases. Approved by NICE (National Institute of Clinical Excellence), it is starting to be used at major hospitals across Europe.

In the past, patients identified at DCH for needing this hi-tech medical care would have been referred to larger hospitals in London or Bristol. Now due to this ground-breaking treatment, the Urology Unit at Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust can treat patients most in need without them having to make long and unnecessary journeys.

Naveed Afzal, Consultant Urological Surgeon at Dorset County Hospital, said: 'Offering the best level of patient care requires two key ingredients. The very best trained medical staff using the latest proven techniques and equipment. Our Urology unit now has the capability to treat a range of different urinary tract issues, offering our patients the latest medical treatment and care. The laser is a key part of this and the fact that it's specifically upgradeable means we'll maintain this cutting edge ability in the years to come.'

Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust looks after the health needs of people throughout West Dorset, serving a largely rural population of 220,000 and employing over 3,300 staff. It is the main provider of acute hospital services for Weymouth and Portland, West Dorset, North Dorset and Purbeck and renal services for patients throughout Dorset and South Somerset. For county-wide services provided by the Trust, it serves a total population of 850,000 via Dorset County Hospital in Dorchester and periphery community hospitals. Staff also work in schools, residential homes, family doctor surgeries and in patients' own homes.

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