



## **Carbapenemase-Producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE)**

### **What does Carbapenemase-Producing Enterobacteriaceae mean?**

Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae (sometimes called CPE) is the name given to a group of bacteria that have become very resistant to antibiotics including those called carbapenems. Many of these bacteria usually live harmlessly in the gut of humans or that of animals and help you digest food. However, if they get into the wrong place such as the bladder or bloodstream they can cause infection.

### **Why does carbapenem resistance matter?**

Carbapenems are a group of powerful antibiotics that can only be given to you in hospital directly into the bloodstream intravenously using a cannula or hypodermic syringe. Until now, they were antibiotics that could always be relied upon when other antibiotics failed. However, CPE is difficult to treat with antibiotics.

### **Does latent colonisation (see below) with CPE need to be treated?**

Because CPE normally live in the gut without causing problems ('colonisation') they do not always need to be treated. However, if you have an infection then treatment is required. Infections caused by this germ can be very difficult to treat with antibiotics. This is why it is so important to prevent its spread.

### **How can the spread of CPE be prevented?**

Generally, patients will be accommodated in a single room with its own toilet facilities. Healthcare staff (or 'nurses' or 'clinicians') will wash their hands or use alcohol hand gel regularly. They will use gloves and aprons when caring for patients to help prevent spread of any germs. The most important measure for you is to wash your hands whilst in hospital use alcohol hand gel regularly. It is especially important to wash your hands well with soap and water after going to the toilet.

You should avoid touching any medical devices such as your urinary catheter tube and your intravenous drip, particularly at the point where it is inserted into the skin. Visitors coming to see you will be asked to wear an apron and wash their hands on entering and leaving the room.



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## How will I know if I am at risk of CPE?

The main risk factors for CPE are having been in a hospital abroad, in a UK hospital which has had patients carrying this germ or being exposed to other carriers of this germ. If you have these risk factors we will ask to screen you. You will be informed of the result as soon as we can.

## How do you screen for CPE?

The screening method requires a swab to be inserted just into your rectum (bottom) and/or a stool sample may also be requested. The specimen will be sent to the Laboratory to see what germs grow. A result will normally take 2-3 days to be available.

## Where can I find more information?

If you would like any further information please speak to a member of staff on your ward, who may contact the Infection Prevention and Control Team for you.

The Public Health England website is another source of information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/carbapenemase-producing-enterobacteriaceae-early-detection-management-and-control-toolkit-for-acute-trusts>

From 1st January 2019 smoking will not be permitted on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds.

**This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email [gwh.pals@nhs.net](mailto:gwh.pals@nhs.net)**

### Document Control

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