

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Carbapenemase-producing enterobacteriaceae

I am a contact - what does this mean?

The aim of this leaflet is to explain the presence of carbapenemase-producing enterobacteriaceae (sometimes called CPE) and the strategy for treating it and preventing the spread of infection.

What can I do to prevent the spread of infection?

- Thorough hand washing with soap or antimicrobial agent and water and drying is particularly important as this helps prevent the germ from spreading.
- Kindly remind our staff if they forget to wash their hands.

Can I have visitors?

You can have visitors provided they are well enough to visit you. They will be asked to wash their hands with soap and water before and after visiting you. Remind your visitors to wash their hands with soap and water if they forget. If you are concerned about infecting anyone, please ask your nurse for advice.

What does CPE mean?

Enterobacteriaceae are bacteria that usually live harmlessly in the gut of humans. This is called 'colonisation' (a person is said to be a 'carrier').

However, if the bacteria get into the wrong place, such as the bladder or bloodstream, they can cause infection.

Carbapenem resistance

Some patients in hospital need to be given one of the more powerful antibiotics (called carbapenems). CPE is resistant to these antibiotics. This means they don't work as well in a patient who is a carrier of the CPE bacteria.

Why does carbapenem resistance matter?

Carbapenem antibiotics can only be given in hospital directly into the bloodstream.

Until now, doctors have relied on them to successfully treat certain 'difficult' infections when other antibiotics have failed to do so. Therefore, in a hospital, where there are many vulnerable patients, spread of resistant bacteria can cause problems.

Does CPE need to be treated?

If a person is a carrier of CPE, they do not need to be treated. As mentioned, these bacteria can live harmlessly in the gut. However, if the bacteria have caused an infection, then antibiotics will be required.

How is CPE spread?

If a patient in hospital is carrying this bacteria, it can get into the ward environment and can also be passed on by direct contact with that particular patient. For that reason, the patient will normally be accommodated in a single room.

Effective environmental cleaning and good hand hygiene by staff, patients and visitors can reduce the risk of spread significantly.

Do I need to be screened?

Occasionally, it isn't immediately known that a patient is carrying this bacteria and so they may not be placed into a single room straight away. Screening will be offered if you have shared the same bay (or ward) with a patient who has been found to be carrying CPE. This screening is offered as there is a slight chance that you could have picked up the bacteria and are carrying it too.

How will I be screened for CPE?

Screening usually entails taking a rectal swab by inserting it just inside your rectum (bottom). Alternatively, you may be asked to provide a sample of faeces. The swab/sample will be sent to the laboratory, and you will normally be informed of the result within two to three days. If the result is negative nothing further is required unless you are staying in hospital for some time.

In that case, you will probably be asked to provide a sample on a regular basis, for example once a week, as a precautionary measure.

What if the result is positive?

If the result is positive do ask your doctor or nurse to explain this to you in more detail and to provide a leaflet relating to positive results. You will be given a single room until you leave hospital, unless a more infectious patient takes priority. No treatment is necessary unless you have an infection, when antibiotics will be given.

Further sources of information

- NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions
- Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk
- World Health Organisation: [World Patient Safety Day 2023: Engaging Patients for Patient Safety \(who.int\)](http://WorldPatientSafetyDay2023:EngagingPatientsforPatientSafety(who.int))

Contact details

If you have any further questions or concerns, please talk to one of your nurses or a member of the Infection Prevention and Control Team.

The team is available seven days a week, 8am to 4pm, and there is an answer phone outside these hours:

- Telephone: 01623 622515 extension 3840/3525.

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

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