

Carbapenemase- producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE)

Information for patients, relatives and carers

I may be a carrier (or have an infection)
What does this mean for me?

① For more information, please contact:

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What does ‘carbapenemase-producing enterobacteriaceae’ mean?

This leaflet sets out information about a certain group of bacteria, called ‘enterobacteriaceae’ (which is pronounced “Entero-bacteria-c-i”). These bacteria usually live harmlessly in our gut. However, if they find their way into the wrong place (e.g. the bladder or bloodstream), they can cause an infection.

Carbapenems are one of the most powerful types of antibiotics. Until now, doctors have relied on them to successfully treat certain ‘difficult’ infections when other antibiotics have failed. However, some enterobacteriaceae can produce chemicals (called carbapenemases) that destroy carbapenems. These bacteria are said to be resistant to the antibiotics and are called ‘carbapenemase-producing enterobacteriaceae’ (shortened to CPE).

A person with these bacteria in their gut is said to be a CPE carrier.

Why does carbapenem resistance matter?

Infections caused by CPE can be difficult to treat because the bacteria are often resistant to lots of antibiotics.

How are CPE spread?

If a patient in hospital is a CPE carrier it can get into the ward environment and can also be passed between patients by staff, or by direct contact between patients themselves. For these reasons, a CPE carrier will normally stay in a single room with its own toilet facilities. CPE can also pass their carbapenemase-making ability on to other bacteria, further encouraging their spread around the hospital.

How will I know if I am at risk of being a carrier or having an infection?

You may be at risk of carrying a CPE if one or more of the following applies to you:

- You have been in a hospital abroad in the last 12 months
- You have been in a UK hospital, that has had patients carrying these bacteria, in the last 12 months
- You have been in contact with a known carrier at home

If any of these reasons apply to you, screening will be arranged and you will stay in a single room with your own toilet facilities, at least until the results are known.

How will I be screened for CPE?

Usually a rectal swab is inserted just inside your rectum (bottom). Alternatively, you may be asked to provide a sample of faeces (poo). The swab / sample will be sent to the laboratory and you will normally be told the result within two to three days. If the result is negative, the doctors or nurses will wish to check that a further two samples are negative before you can move on the main ward. If all results are negative no further actions are required.

What if the result is positive?

If the result is positive please ask your doctor or nurse to explain this to you in more detail and to provide a letter or leaflet relating to being a CPE carrier. You will be given a single room until you leave hospital. No treatment is necessary, unless you have an infection due to the CPE, which your doctor will treat with antibiotics.

What about if I go home during screening?

Being screened for CPE will not stop you from leaving hospital. When you go home no special measures or treatment are required. You should carry on as normal. It is important to maintain good hand hygiene. We advise you wash your hands regularly, or use a hand wipe, especially after using the toilet or commode, before meals and when they look dirty.

If you did not complete the screening before going home you will be offered further screens if you are admitted to the hospital again in the future. No screening will be done when you are at home.

Where can I find more information?

If you would like any further information please speak to a member of your care staff, who may also contact the Infection Prevention Team for you. When you are at home, please contact your GP for further advice if you have any questions or concerns.

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:
Infection Prevention Team, The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or telephone 01904 725860.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

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