

Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE)

What does Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae 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.

Carbapenems are one of the most powerful types of antibiotics.

Carbapenemases are enzymes (chemicals), made by some strains of bacteria, which allow them to destroy these antibiotics and so the bacteria are said to be resistant to the antibiotics

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 'difficult' infections when other antibiotics have failed to do so.

In a hospital, where there are many vulnerable patients, spread of resistant bacteria can cause problems.

Does carriage of CPE need to be treated?

If a person is a carrier of CPE, they do not need to be treated.

However, if the bacteria have caused an infection, then antibiotics will be required.

How did I 'pick up' CPE?

As mentioned above, CPE can be found, living harmlessly, in the gut of humans and so it can be difficult to say when or where you picked it up.

However, there is an increased chance of picking up CPE if you have been:

- a patient in a hospital abroad or in
- a UK hospital that has had patients carrying CPE
- or if you have been in contact with a carrier elsewhere

What does it mean if the result is CPE positive?

If the result is positive, your doctor or nurse will be able to discuss this with you in detail. If you have an infection, you will need to have antibiotics.

However, if there are no signs of infection and you are simply carrying the bacteria, no treatment will be needed. You will be accommodated in a single room, ideally with toilet facilities.

Our staff will clean their hands regularly, and use gloves, aprons and other personal protective equipment where required while they are looking after you.

Regular hygiene measures such as cleaning of your environment and equipment used for your care will be undertaken by staff.

It is important you wash your hands frequently, especially after going to the toilet.

You should avoid touching medical devices (if you have any) such as your urinary catheter tube and your intravenous drip, particularly at the point where it is inserted into your body or any wounds if you have any.

We will ask your visitors to wash their hands on entering and leaving your room. We may ask them to wear a gown and gloves if they are assisting with your personal care.

Visitors should avoid sitting on your bed and use the chairs provided in the ward.



What about when I go home?

Whilst there is a chance that you may still be a carrier when you go home quite often this will go with time.

No special measures or treatment are required; any infection will have been treated prior to your discharge.

You should carry on as normal, maintaining good hand hygiene.

If you have any concerns, you may wish to contact your GP for advice.

Before you leave hospital, ask the doctor or nurse to give you a letter advising that you have been colonised with CPE.

This will be useful for the future, and it is important that you make health care staff aware of it whenever you have healthcare contact in the future including healthcare in the community.

Should you or a member of your household be admitted to hospital, you should let the hospital staff know that you are or have been a carrier and show them the letter you may have been given previously.

Contact NHS and PALS

You can also visit the NHS website for general information about infection prevention and control.

[nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk)

You can also contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), who can listen to your concerns, and direct you to the right place for more information.

Call 01189 605027 or email PALS@berkshire.nhs.uk

Contact us



Scan me

 [berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk](https://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk)

@ infection.control@berkshire.nhs.uk

 01189 605 140 (Mon to Fri 9am to 5pm)