

Contact of a Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE) case

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 is Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae spread?

If a patient in hospital is carrying Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae it can get into the ward environment and can also be passed on by direct contact with that patient. For that reason, the patient will normally be accommodated in a single room if it is safe to do so. Effective environmental cleaning and good hand hygiene by all, staff and patients, can reduce the risk of spread significantly.

Do I need to be screened?

Occasionally, it isn't immediately known that a patient is carrying CPE 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 identified as a close contact 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 CPE and are carrying it too.

How will I be screen 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 (poo). The swab / faeces sample will be sent to the laboratory, and you will normally be informed of the results within two to three days. Additionally wound swabs and urine samples are obtained as part of the screening if you have wounds or a urinary catheter.

What if the result is positive?

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

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



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