



Carbapenamase Producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE)

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What is CPE and why am I being screened?

What does CPE mean?

CPE stands for Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae. Enterobacteriaceae are bacteria (bugs) that usually live harmlessly in your gut. This is called 'colonisation'. People with enterobacteriaceae are said to be a 'carrier'. However, if the bacteria get into the wrong place, such as the bladder or bloodstream they can cause infection.

What are Carbapenems?

Carbapenems are one of the most powerful types of antibiotics. Carbapenemases are enzymes (chemicals) made by certain kinds of bacteria, which means they are then able to destroy carbapenem antibiotics. If this happens the antibiotics can no longer kill the bacteria and they are said to be resistant.

If I am carrying CPE do I 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 can we prevent the spread of CPE?

It is really important that we ensure that everywhere is kept clean on the ward to prevent spread to other patients. It is also important for staff and patients to use good hand hygiene, including washing hands before meals and after going to the toilet.

Do I need to be screened?

We offer screening to all patients that have had an overnight stay in a hospital overseas in the past 12 months, have been in a hospital in the UK that is known to have outbreaks of CPE or those that have been in contact with another patient with 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 entails taking a rectal swab by inserting it just inside your rectum (bottom). Alternatively, you may be asked to provide a sample of faeces. This is likely to be repeated during your hospital stay. Additional clinical samples may also be requested. The samples will be sent to the laboratory and you will normally be informed of the result within five days.

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 and hospital staff will wear aprons and gloves to care for you. No treatment is necessary unless you have an infection. If you do have an infection, antibiotics will be given. CPE will not restrict you from receiving any medical care that you need. It's important to remember that hand washing is a key method to prevent the spread of infection.

Contact

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact a member of the Infection Prevention and Control Team.

For Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham

Tel: **0121 371 3785** (internal **13785**)

For Heartlands Hospital, Good Hope Hospital and Solihull Hospital

Tel: **0121 424 1137**



The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm or call 0121 371 4323.

Infection Prevention and Control
University Hospitals Birmingham
NHS Foundation Trust
