



**Northumbria Healthcare**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# **Carbapenemase producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE)**

Issued by The Infection Control Team

## What is CPE?

Carbapenemase producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE) is the name given to a group of bacteria that have become very resistant to antibiotics including those called Carbapenems.

Enterobacteriaceae are a large family of bacteria that usually live harmlessly in the gut of humans and animals. However, if they get into the bladder or bloodstream they can cause infections. You may be identified as a carrier of CPE, this means the bacteria is present within your body but not causing any illness or infection, therefore no treatment would be required.

## Why resistance matters?

Carbapenems are a valuable family of antibiotics that are normally given for severe infections. Doctors have previously relied on these when all others have failed. As CPE can be difficult to treat we need to take precautions to prevent the infection spreading to other people.

## How did I get CPE?

People can get CPE if they have been in hospitals abroad but also in some hospitals within the UK. It is important that you inform your doctor of any recent travel or hospital admissions so that you receive the most appropriate care and treatment. You can also become colonised with CPE if you have taken a lot of antibiotics in the past. This is because the resistant bacteria that have survived after you have taken the antibiotics are then able to grow. You may also acquire CPE if you have been exposed to other carriers.

## How can the spread of CPE be prevented?

If you have CPE infection or colonisation it is important you are nursed in a single room. This is to reduce any further risks to yourself and others around you. Good hand hygiene should be promoted by yourself and those around you. Your visitors may be asked to wear an apron and gloves if they are assisting you with personal care.

## Why am I being tested?

You will be tested for CPE if:-

- You have been a patient in a foreign country within the past 12 months.
- You have been in a UK hospital which has had an increased incidence of CPE.
- You have had CPE previously.
- A person you have been in close contact with has CPE.

## How will I be tested?

With your consent a healthcare worker may obtain a rectal swab. Alternatively, you may prefer to provide a faecal and urine sample.

## Results explained

**Positive result:** - this means you have the bacteria in your body but does not always mean that you are infected. If your doctor thinks you are infected, then they will contact a Microbiologist who will advise antibiotics that are suitable to treat your infection.

You will remain in your single room with your own toilet or allocated commode whilst in hospital. If you have any devices in place for example a urinary catheter you should avoid touching this as much as possible.

**Negative result:** - If the result is negative this means you are not infected or colonised with CPE. However, a further two samples will need to be confirmed as negative before you can be moved onto the main ward area. If you are admitted to hospital at a later date it may be that they will repeat the test.

## **Can I be cured of CPE?**

Sometimes the body will eventually clear itself of CPE by its natural healing and cleansing action. There are some medicines available to help treat CPE infection but there is no medicine available to remove CPE colonisation.

## **What happens when I go home?**

Nothing specific needs to change, all we ask is that you try and maintain a good standard of hand hygiene. It would be useful for you to inform your GP that CPE was identified whilst you were in hospital. This will provide guidance on appropriate treatment for you in the future. If in future you are admitted to hospital it would be useful to let the doctor see this leaflet so that you can receive treatment and care in a timely manner.

## **Where can I find more information?**

For further information, please speak to a member of your care staff, alternatively information may also be found on the Public Health England website.

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england)

## Contact us

If you would like to discuss this information leaflet, please call 0344 811 8111 and ask to speak with the Infection Prevention and Control team.





## Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**

## Other sources of information

### NHS 111

### NHS Choices

[www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx)

### NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: 01670 511098

Email: [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk)

### Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

[www.northumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk)

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