



Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Carbapenemase producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE)

Issued by 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 not only in hospitals abroad but 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 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 any UK Hospital other than any Newcastle Trust or the Borders General Hospital.
- 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. No further screening will be carried out and you may be moved into the main ward area.

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 UK Health Security Agency website.

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

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: 0800 032 0202

Text: 07815 500015

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

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General Enquiries 03 44 811 8111

www.northumbria.nhs.uk



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