

Information for patients and carers

**Carbapenemase-producing
Enterobacteriaceae (CPE)**

The bottom of the page features three horizontal, wavy bands of blue color. The top band is a light blue, the middle band is a medium blue, and the bottom band is a dark blue, creating a layered, wave-like effect.

What is “Carbapenems-Producing Enterobacterales (CPE)?”

Enterobacterales 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. Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales (abbreviated to CPE) are a type of bacteria which have become resistant to carbapenems, a group of powerful antibiotics. This resistance is helped by enzymes called carbapenemases, which are made by some strains of the bacteria and allows them to destroy carbapenem antibiotics. This means the bacteria can cause infections which are resistant to carbapenem antibiotics and many other antibiotics.

Why carbapenem resistance matters?

Doctors rely on carbapenem antibiotics to successfully treat certain complicated infections when other antibiotics have failed. The spread of these resistant bacteria can cause problems to vulnerable patients in hospitals or other settings, because there are so few antibiotics available to treat the infections they cause.

How you can get this infection and what the symptoms are

These bacteria 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 these bacteria if you have been a patient in a hospital abroad or in the UK that has had patients carrying the bacteria, or if you have been in contact with a carrier elsewhere.

How you will be cared for whilst in hospital

You may stay in a single room with toilet facilities or in a specific ward whilst in hospital. You may be asked to provide a number of samples, depending on your length of stay, to check if you are infected with or carrying the bacteria. The samples might include a number of swabs from certain areas, such as where the tube for your drip (if you have one) enters the skin, a rectal swab (a sample taken by inserting a swab briefly inside your bottom), and / or a stool sample.

How the spread of CPE can be prevented

Being in a single room or specific area helps to prevent spread of the bacteria. Healthcare workers will use gloves and aprons when caring for you and should wash their hands regularly. The most important measure for you to take is to wash your hands well with soap and water, 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 skin. Visitors will be asked to wash their hands on entering and leaving the room and may be asked to wear an apron and gloves if you are assisting with personal care.

What happens when you go home?

No special measures or treatment are required at home. 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 or card advising that you have had an infection and may still be a carrier of CPE. This will be useful for the future, and it is important that you make healthcare staff aware of it. 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 of CPE and show them the letter/card

How long a person can carry the bacteria?

There is no definitive answer to how long a person may carry the bacteria. The length of time could be anything from a few days to indefinitely. Treatment with certain antibiotics (for any infection) may also affect length of carriage. Effective hygiene practices and the use of standard precautions for all individuals receiving care will minimise the transmission of carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales.

Where to find more information

If you would like any further information please speak to a member of your care staff, who may also contact the Infection Prevention and Control Team for you. The Public Health England website is another source of information.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware

Public Health England (2020) Framework of actions to contain carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/carbapenem-resistance-guidance-data-and-analysis>

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:

Infection Prevention and Control on **01772 523785**.

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team.

If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**

Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.

This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

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