

CPE – I am a contact of a carrier/person who is infected

Infection Control Team **Patient Information Leaflet**

Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae – I am a contact of someone who is a carrier or has an infection – what does this mean?

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 these bacteria, which allow them to destroy carbapenem 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 certain 'difficult' infections when other antibiotics have failed to do so. Therefore, in a hospital, where there are many vulnerable patients, spread of resistant bacteria can cause problems.

Does carriage of carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae need to be treated?

If a person is a carrier of carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae (sometimes called CPE), they do not need to be treated. As mentioned, these bacteria can live harmlessly in the gut. However, if the bacteria have caused an infection, antibiotics will be required.

How is carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae spread?

If a patient in hospital is carrying these bacteria, they 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. 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 people need to be screened. It is not immediately known that a patient is carrying these bacteria 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 ward) with a patient who has been found to be carrying carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae. This screening is offered as there is a **slight** chance that you could have picked up the bacteria and are carrying them too.

How will I be screened for carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae?

Screening usually consists of taking a rectal swab by inserting it just inside your rectum (bottom). Alternatively, you may be asked to provide a sample of faeces.

The swab/sample will be sent to the laboratory and you will normally be informed of the result within two to three days. If the result is negative, nothing further is required unless you are staying in hospital for some time. In that case, you will probably be asked to provide a sample on a regular basis, for example once a week, as a precautionary measure.

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 (CPE – I may be a carrier or have an infection). 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.

Where can I find more information?

If you would like any more information, please speak to a member of your care staff, who may also contact the Infection Prevention and Control Team for you.

Reference

Public Health England (2013). *Acute trust toolkit for the early detection, management and control of carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae*. London: PHE publications.

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Infection Control Team on 01384 244174 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-information-leaflets/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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