NHS
Gloucestershire Hospitals
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Carbapenemase-Producing Enterobacterales (CPE): Information for Patients and Visitors

Introduction

The information in this leaflet answers some of the commonly asked questions about **Carbapenemase-Producing Enterobacterales** (CPE).

This leaflet explains:

- What CPE is
- Why some patients are tested for CPE
- What happens if your test is positive
- How you can help prevent the spread of CPE
- What to do when you go home

What is CPE?

CPE stands for Carbapenemase-Producing Enterobacterales.

These are bacteria (germs) that can live naturally in the gut without causing harm. Many people who carry CPE feel completely well and do not know they have it. This is called carrying the bacteria or colonisation.

CPE are important because they are resistant to some antibiotics that doctors use to treat serious infections. If you develop an infection caused by CPE, it may be more difficult to treat. Most people who carry CPE do not have an infection and do not need treatment.

Why is CPE important?

Hospitals work hard to stop CPE spreading between patients.

By identifying patients who carry CPE, we can:

- provide the safest possible care
- reduce the risk of infections
- prevent the bacteria spreading to other patients who may be more vulnerable
- make sure the right antibiotics are used if treatment is needed

How is CPE spread?

CPE can spread:

- by dirty hands
- through contact with contaminated equipment
- from unclean surfaces

CPE does not spread through the air.

If CPE enters parts of the body where it does not normally belong, such as a wound, the bladder or the bloodstream, it may cause an infection.

Good hand hygiene and effective cleaning help prevent CPE spreading.

Who may be tested for CPE?

You may be offered a CPE test if you:

- have stayed in another hospital in the UK
- have received healthcare abroad
- have previously tested positive for CPE
- have been in contact with someone known to have CPE
- are admitted to certain areas of the hospital
- have received care in a specialist care facility

Being tested does not mean you have an CPE infection.

How is the test done?

A nurse may take:

- a small swab from just inside your bottom (rectum),

  or

- a sample of poo (faeces)

You may also need other samples if you have a wound, drain or urinary catheter.

The test may feel uncomfortable, but it should not be painful.

We will always respect your privacy and dignity.

You can refuse a rectal swab. If you prefer, you can provide a sample of faeces (poo) instead.

Results are usually available within 2 to 3 days. Your treatment and care will not be delayed while waiting for the result.

What happens if my test is positive?

A positive result usually means that you carry CPE bacteria in your gut.

This does not mean that you have an infection.

Most people who carry CPE:

- feel well
- have no symptoms
- do not need treatment

If you develop an infection in the future, knowing that you carry CPE helps doctors choose the most effective antibiotics quickly.

How will I be cared for in hospital?

To reduce the risk of spreading, you may stay in a single room during your hospital stay.

Staff may wear gloves and aprons or gowns when providing your care and will clean their hands regularly.

You can help by:

- Washing your hands with soap and water after using the toilet
- Cleaning your hands before eating

- Avoiding touching drips, catheters, wounds or dressings unless a member of staff asks you to
- Following any advice given by staff
- Good hand hygiene is one of the best ways to prevent infection.

Can I have visitors?

Yes. Family and friends can still visit you while you are in hospital.

All visitors should:

- clean their hands when entering and leaving your room
- follow any advice given by hospital staff
- avoid visiting if they are unwell

Visitors who help you with personal care may be asked to wear gloves and aprons.

Children and babies should only visit after discussing this with the ward staff.

What happens when I go home?

You can continue your normal daily activities when you return home.

No special treatment or cleaning is usually required.

We recommend:

- washing your hands with soap and water after using the toilet
- washing your hands before preparing food
- asking anyone helping with your care to wash their hands before and after providing care

Clothes, towels and bed linen can be washed as normal.

Future healthcare appointments

If you attend hospital, have treatment, or are admitted in the future, please tell healthcare staff that you have previously tested positive for CPE.

You may be given a CPE information card to show healthcare staff. This helps us provide the safest care and take the right precautions if needed.

Key messages

Most people who carry CPE:

- Feel well
- Have no symptoms
- Do not need treatment
- Can continue normal activities
- Can help prevent spread through good hand hygiene

Further information

If you would like more information or have questions about CPE, please speak to a member of the nursing or medical team caring for you. They may contact the local Infection Prevention and Control Team on your behalf.

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Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.

Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you asked to make a choice about your healthcare.



1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation.

***Ask 3 Questions** is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85

AQuA Advancing Quality Alliance

Right Care Shared Decision Making Programme

NHS https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/

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