

Healthier Communities,
Outstanding Care



Sherwood Forest Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Carbapenemase-Producing Enterobacterales (CPE)

Information for patients



What is CPE?

Carbapenemase-producing enterobacterales (CPE) are a large family of bacteria that usually live harmlessly in your gut. This is called colonisation. Someone who is colonised is called a carrier. You would not know you were a carrier unless you were tested.

Most of the time CPE does not cause any problems and no treatment is needed. However, if the bacteria get into the wrong place, such as the bladder or bloodstream, they can cause an infection, particularly in patients with a low immune system

This can be a problem because these bacteria:

- Can be spread to and cause infection in other vulnerable patients.
- Are almost totally resistant to some of the strongest antibiotics that we use in hospitals – there can even be difficult cases where other types of antibiotics do not work, which makes a CPE infection very difficult to treat.

Who is most at risk of getting CPE infection?

People whose ability to fight infections is low. This includes (but is not limited to) people:

- With cancer.
- Having dialysis and those with indwelling lines.
- Being treated in an intensive care unit, including those with Tracheostomies.
- Who have had transplants.
- With chronic wounds.
- With enterostomies.

How is CPE spread in hospital?

This bacteria can be spread:

- From person to person, on the hands and skin of staff, students, patients and visitors, by touching someone who is infected or colonised.
- By touching room surfaces and objects such as equipment, bowls, shared electrical or medical devices, surfaces around patients (for example, bedside tables), commodes and toilets that have CPE on them.

How do I know if I have CPE?

One of the main ways in which CPE is spread is by the transfer of patients between wards and between hospitals, so we will ask to screen (test) you for CPE when:

- You are transferred to a ward with vulnerable patients.
- You are moved here from another hospital in the UK.
- We know or suspect you have come into contact with someone who has CPE or you yourself are known to have had CPE from a previous admission.

What does the screening test involve?

We usually take samples from your rectum (the end part of your gut), where a swab (very similar to a long cotton bud) is briefly put just inside your bottom (3 to 4cm into your rectum). We may also test samples of your faeces (poo) and other relevant sites (such as wounds and/or line sites). These samples are then tested in a laboratory to look for CPE. We normally tell you the provisional results within three days.

You will be put into an isolation room if you are tested positive.

In isolation rooms:

- We will put a sign on the isolation room door to remind everyone of the precautions they need to take.
- Healthcare staff must wash their hands before and after direct contact with a patient and use gloves and aprons when caring for you.
- Visitors must wash their hands when they enter and leave the room and may be asked to wear aprons or gowns.
- Visitors must not use patient bathrooms.
- Patients must wash their hands well, with soap and water, before eating meals and after going to the toilet.
- Patients should avoid touching medical devices (if they have any) such as urinary catheter tubes and intravenous drips, particularly at the entry site.

What happens when I go home?

You can still be a carrier when you go home. You do not need to take any special measures or have treatment, as we will have treated any infection before you leave hospital. You can carry on as normal and continue to maintain good hand hygiene.

If you have any concerns, contact your GP for advice. Your GP will receive notification that you are CPE colonised.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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