

Healthier Communities,  
Outstanding Care



Sherwood Forest Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Extended Spectrum Beta-Lactamase (ESBL)

**Information for patients**



## What is ESBL?

ESBL stands for Extended Spectrum Beta-Lactamase, an enzyme (chemical) made by some germs which prevents certain antibiotics from working. Bacteria that are able to produce this enzyme are more resistant to many of the antibiotics commonly prescribed to treat infections, thus making an infection caused by an ESBL more difficult to treat. ESBL bacteria are sometimes found during routine investigations. People often feel well with no signs or symptoms of infection and therefore do not require treatment.

## How did I get ESBL?

It is difficult to say exactly where you may have acquired an ESBL bacteria. Some people come into hospital already carrying the germs; some pick it up while in hospital. It may be as a result of previous treatment or like most germs, they can spread easily on unwashed hands or on equipment that has not been cleaned correctly.

## How can we prevent it spreading?

Thorough hand washing and use of alcohol gel is the best way to prevent the spread of these germs. Staff, patients, and visitors must all be encouraged to wash their hands and use the alcohol gel that is provided. Staff will wear gloves and aprons to protect their hands and uniforms when undertaking specific tasks.

## Can I stay on the same ward?

Hopefully you can stay on the same ward. You may be moved to a single room to be nursed in isolation, with the door closed. If a single room is not available on your current ward you might be asked to move to a single room on another ward. If there are several patients with the same germ on the ward you may be nursed in a shared area with patients of the same sex.

## Can I have visitors?

Your friends and family may continue to visit you. They do not need to wear gloves or aprons whilst visiting, unless involved in hands-on nursing care. It is important that your visitors wash their hands when they arrive and before going home.

## **What happens when I am ready to leave hospital?**

If you are otherwise well, ESBL should not delay your discharge. If you need a district nurse, he/she will be informed. You do not need to take any special precautions when you get home.

## **What if I need to come into hospital again?**

If you are admitted to any hospital in the future always tell your nurses and doctors that you have been ESBL positive in the past.

## **Why is it important to know if you are carrying ESBL?**

ESBL is sometimes found during routine investigations. People often feel well with no signs or symptoms of infection and therefore do not require treatment. However, if ESBL get the opportunity to enter your body they can cause problems. This is more likely to happen in people who are already unwell. If your doctor feels the ESBL is causing an infection they may prescribe appropriate antibiotics.

## **Further sources of information**

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net).

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