



# Carbapenemase-producing organism / Carbapenem-producing Enterobacteriaceae

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## Information for patients from the Infection Prevention and Control Team

You have been given this information leaflet because you, or your relative, has been found to be a carrier of, or have an infection with, a carbapenemase-producing organism.

### What are carbapenemase-producing organisms / Enterobacteriaceae?

There are many different types of 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 gets into the wrong place, such as the bladder or bloodstream, they can cause infection.

Carbapenemases are enzymes (chemicals), made by some strains of these bacteria, which allow them to destroy carbapenem antibiotics, a powerful group of 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. In a hospital, where there are many vulnerable patients, spread of resistant bacteria can cause problems.

There is an increased chance of picking up these bacteria if you have been a patient in a hospital abroad or in a UK hospital that has had patients carrying the bacteria, or if you have been in contact with a carrier elsewhere.

### How is the infection found?

Samples (swabs) may be taken 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 just inside your rectum (bottom)), and/or a stool sample. This swab will have "grown" a carbapenemase-producing organism.

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

If a person is a carrier of carbapenemase-producing organisms / Enterobacteriaceae, they do not need to be treated. However, if the bacteria have caused an infection, then antibiotics will be needed.

## How will I be cared for whilst in hospital?

You will be looked after in a single room, either with ensuite toilet facilities or a dedicated commode, whilst you are in hospital.

## How can the spread of carbapenemase-producing organisms / Enterobacteriaceae be prevented?

- Looking after you in a single room helps to prevent the spread of the bacteria.
- Healthcare workers will use gloves and aprons when caring for you, and they will clean their hands regularly with alcohol hand rub.
- The most important thing you can do is wash your hands well with soap and water, especially after going to the toilet and before eating; a nurse will help you with this if you need help.
- 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 clean their hands with alcohol hand rub on entering and leaving your room.

## What about when I go home?

You will be able to go home when your doctors are happy that you are well enough to be discharged from hospital. Whilst there is a chance that you may still be a carrier when you go home, quite often this will go away with time.

No special measures or treatment are needed; any infection will have been treated before you leave hospital. You should carry on as normal, keep washing your hands regularly. If you have any concerns contact your GP for advice.

The Infection Prevention and Control Team will write to your GP, telling them that you have had an infection with, or have been a carrier of, a carbapenemase-producing organism / Enterobacteriaceae.

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.

## Where can I find more information?

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to either the nurse in charge of the ward or the matron. If they are unable to help you or you need further information, please contact a member of the Infection Prevention and Control Team on:

- **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital**, Margate  
Telephone: 01843 225544 extension 725-3625

- **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**, Canterbury  
Telephone: 01227 864049
- **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford  
Telephone: 01233 633331 extension 723-8202 or 723-8198

**This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.**

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments** please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 783145 (tel://+441227783145), or email [ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net) ([ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net))

**Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals website (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/information-for-patients/patient-information/>).

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