



What is CPE (Carbapenamase Producing Enterobacteraciae)?

The gut of every normal, healthy human has bugs (bacteria) called enterobacterales which do no harm. However, if these bugs get into the wrong place, such as the bladder or bloodstream, they can cause infection. They **do not** cause diarrhoea, vomiting or tummy upset.

CPE used to be referred to as CRE. It is a particular type of common gut bacteria that antibiotics do not work on, they have become resistant to antibiotics. They are resistant to a powerful group of antibiotics called carbapenems.

Carbapenems are an important group of antibiotics that doctors often rely on to treat infections where treatment with other common antibiotics will not work. However it is important to know there are still some antibiotics that do work against CPE.

All patients admitted to hospital are tested for CPE. The nurse looking after you will explain this test to you.

Can CPE be harmful?

For most patients, CPE lives harmlessly in the bowel and does not cause infection. This is because the person's immune system controls the CPE in the bowel and prevents it from spreading elsewhere in the body. Sometimes CPE can cause infections in patients, for example when they are very ill or while receiving chemotherapy. CPE can cause infections, such as kidney infections, wound infections or in severe cases, infection of the blood. Antibiotics are needed to treat CPE infection.

How do people get CPE?

Patients who have already taken lots of antibiotics are more at risk of developing CPE. The reason for this is that the more bugs are exposed to antibiotics, the more likely they will develop resistance to that antibiotic. The antibiotic stops working.

CPE is more common in some countries than others. If you have been a patient in a hospital abroad in the past year, please tell your doctor.

If you have been admitted to an Irish hospital in the last year please also tell the doctor & nurse looking after you.

Patients, healthcare workers and visitors can be carriers of CPE. It can spread between patients through direct contact with each other or by touching items or surfaces that the person with CPE may have touched such as bed rails, toilets or equipment.

As patients in hospital are much more vulnerable to infection than patients in their own homes, special precautions are required to prevent the spread of CPE between patients in hospital.


What are the special precautions for patients with CPE?

If you are found to have CPE you will be cared for in a single room with your own toilet or commode. Staff may wear gloves and long sleeved gowns or aprons before entering your isolation room and before coming into contact with you. Visitors do not need to wear gloves, gowns or aprons.

If you test positive for CPE you will be given a leaflet and a CPE card. Please show this card when attending any healthcare provider.

Patients, visitors and staff must also pay special attention to hand hygiene. All staff must clean their hands before and after any contact with every patient, regardless of whether or not they have CPE.

Visitors must not visit other patients while visiting you in the Hospital.



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How can I help?

If you go to the doctor, dentist, another clinic, hospital or nursing home, it is important to tell them you have had a positive CPE result. They can then take special precautions to stop CPE spreading to other patients who might be vulnerable to getting a CPE infection.

Why do we need to know if a Patient is carrying CPE?

It is useful to know if a patient is carrying CPE if they become unwell. If we know that the patient is carrying CPE then the most effective antibiotics can be chosen early to treat an infection. When staff know that a patient is carrying CPE, special precautions will be put in place immediately, to prevent the CPE spreading to other patients, some of whom might be particularly vulnerable to developing infection if they came into contact with CPE.

What happens when I go home from hospital?

There is no need to take special precautions at home. People in the community are usually fit and healthy so they are less likely than hospital patients to pick up CPE. Clothes, bed linen and dishes can be washed as normal.

Will I get rid of CPE?

Your body may clear CPE from the bowel as you recover, but this is not always the case. It can stay in the bowel for some time. Taking antibiotics can encourage CPE to grow in the bowel again, so they should only be taken when absolutely necessary, and not for colds and flu.

Antibiotics are available to treat CPE infection but they will not clear CPE from the bowel. If a patient has CPE we may share that information with other hospitals. The Patient should also tell their carers of the result on admission to another hospital. This will help to stop the spread of CPE.

How can I contact a member of the Infection Prevention & Control Team?

Tell the Clinical Nurse Manager, Doctor or Nurse looking after you if you would like to speak to a member of the Infection Prevention & Control Team and they will contact us.

We have made every possible effort to make sure that all the information provided in this leaflet is true, accurate, complete and up to date at the time of publication.

Additional information can be found at:
<http://intranet.tuh.ie/departments/IPC/Pages/home.aspx>

References | HSE (Health Service Executive) & HPSC (Health Protection Surveillance Centre)



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PATIENT
INFORMATION
LEAFLET

CPE

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