



## What is ESBL?

Extended-spectrum  $\beta$ -lactamases (ESBLs) are bacterial enzymes that destroy one or more antibiotics. The most common are E. coli and Klebsiella species, they are usually found in the bowel. It is one of the ways bacteria develop resistance to antibiotics.

### How can ESBLs be spread?

ESBLs can be spread very easily. The following are a list of examples:

- Person to person
- Poor hand hygiene
- The Environment
- Patient care equipment

### How can you tell if you have an ESBL?

A swab from your skin or other samples requested by your doctor such as urine, wound or stool specimens are sent to the Microbiology Laboratory for testing. The report will be sent back to your doctor.

### What treatment will I need?

This depends on the results, your doctor will decide what treatment you require depending on whether you are colonised or infected. ESBL bacteria is often found in patients without causing infection, this is referred to as colonised.

### Do I have to stay in hospital longer?

Most patients who are colonised (i.e. no infection) can be discharged from hospital. If you have an infection you may have to stay in hospital until you are finished your antibiotics and are feeling better. It is important to complete the full prescribed treatment.

### Can my family and friends visit me while I am in hospital?

Yes. It is important all visitors clean their hands before and after they visit you. Visitors do not need to wear aprons and gloves. Visitors should not sit on the bed. If your visitor has a long term health condition they should speak to a member of the nursing staff before visiting you. ESBLs do not cause diarrhoea but because they live in the bowel, they may be spread more easily if you are suffering with diarrhoea.

**Please tell your visitor not to visit other Patients during and after their visit with you.**

### Are there any risks to my family at home?

**It is very important to:**

- Continue good hygiene including frequent hand hygiene particularly after using the bathroom, before preparing food and before eating
- Contact with family and friends who are healthy poses no risk
- Encourage good hand hygiene
- Bed linen and personal clothing should be washed and changed as normal

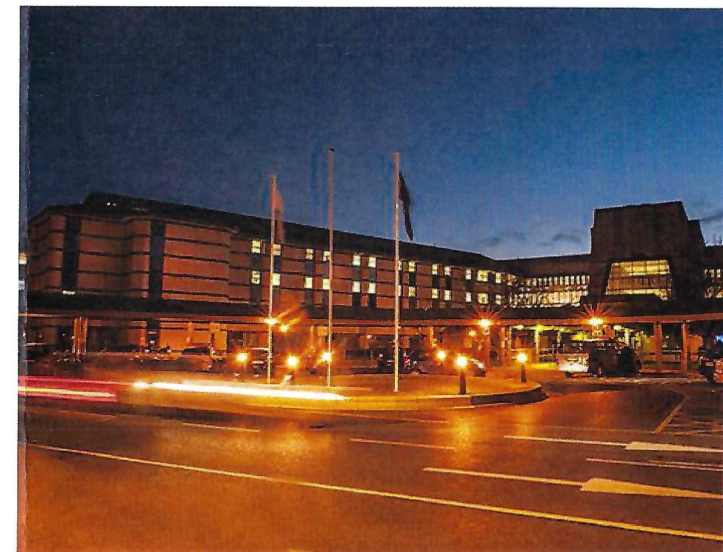
## How can ESBLs be prevented from spreading in the hospital?

The Infection Prevention & Control Nurse will speak with the ward manager or nurse in charge if an ESBL has been diagnosed by the Laboratory.

You may be moved to a single room with your own bathroom for infection control precautions.

A blue sign will be placed on your door.

Healthcare workers caring for you may be wearing apron or gowns and gloves when caring for you. The healthcare worker will remove these items and clean their hands after caring for you.





What can I do to help?

If you are admitted to hospital and have a history of ESBL, it is very important to tell your nurse or doctor.

Remember good hand hygiene practice limits the spread of infection.

If a patient has *ESBL* we may share that information with other hospitals. The Patient should also inform their carers of the result on admission to another hospital. This will help to stop the spread of ESBLs.

### Will I get rid of ESBLs?

Your body may clear ESBLs from the bowel as you recover, but this is not always the case, and it may remain in the bowel for some time.

Taking antibiotics can encourage ESBLs to grow in the bowel again, so they should only be taken when prescribed to treat infection. Antibiotics are available to treat ESBL infections but they will not clear ESBLs from the bowel.

### 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>

Information for the public

Find out more



[www.hse.ie/infectioncontrol](http://www.hse.ie/infectioncontrol)

References | HPSC (Health Protection Surveillance Centre)

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Tallaght University Hospital

Ospidéal Ollscoile Thamhlachta

An Academic Partner of Trinity College Dublin



# ESBL's

## Extended Spectrum $\beta$ – Lactamases

