

Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales (CPE)

I am a carrier or infected with CPE – what does this mean?

This leaflet offers more information about *carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales (CPE)*. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

What does “*Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales*” mean?

Enterobacterales are bacteria that usually live harmlessly in the human gastrointestinal tract (also known as the “gut”). This is called ‘colonisation’ (a person is said to be a ‘carrier’). However, if the bacteria get into the wrong place, such as the bladder or bloodstream, they can cause infection. Carbapenems are one of the most powerful types of antibiotics. Carbapenemases are enzymes (chemicals) made by some strains of these bacteria, which allow them to destroy Carbapenem 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. Therefore, in a hospital, where there are many vulnerable patients, spread of these resistant bacteria can cause problems.

Does carriage of *Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales* need to be treated?

If a person is a carrier of *Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales* (sometimes called CPE), they do not need to be treated. As mentioned, these bacteria can live harmlessly in the gut. However, if the bacteria have caused an infection then antibiotics will be required.

How did 'I pick up' CPE?

Do ask your doctor or nurse to explain this to you in more detail. They may ask an Infection Prevention and Control Nurse to visit you to explain. As mentioned above, sometimes these bacteria can be found living harmlessly in the intestines ("gut") and so it can be difficult to say when or where you have picked it up. However, 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 will I know if I am at risk of being a carrier or having an infection?

Your doctor or nurse may suspect that you are a carrier if you have been in a hospital abroad or in a UK hospital that has had patients carrying these bacteria or if you have been in contact with a carrier elsewhere. If any of these reasons apply to you, screening will be arranged for you and you will be accommodated in a single room with your own toilet facilities at least until the results are known.

How will I be cared for whilst in hospital?

You will be accommodated in a single room with toilet facilities whilst in hospital. You may be asked to provide a number of samples, depending on your length of stay, to check if you are still carrying the bacteria. These will probably be taken on a weekly basis. The samples might include a number of swabs from certain areas, such as where the tube for your drip (if you have one) enters the skin, a rectal swab, i.e. a sample taken by inserting a swab briefly just inside your rectum (bottom) and / or a faecal sample. You will normally be informed of the results within two to three days.

How can the spread of CPE be prevented?

Accommodating you in a single room helps to prevent spread of the bacteria. Healthcare workers should wash their hands regularly. They will use gloves and aprons when caring for you. The most

important measure for you to take is to wash your hands well with soap and water, especially after going to the toilet. 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 the body or skin. Visitors will be asked to wash their hands on entering and leaving the room and may be asked to wear an apron.

What about when I go home?

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 required; any infection will have been treated prior to your discharge. You should carry on as normal, maintaining good hand hygiene. If you have any concerns you may wish to contact your GP for advice. 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 of CPE, or had an infection with CPE.

Where can I find more information?

If you would like any further information please speak to a member of your care staff, who may also contact the Infection Prevention and Control Team for you.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about *Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales*, please contact the infection prevention and control nurses on 020 8725 2459 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones. **Tel:** 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



Reference: COR_CPCOL_01_LP Published: August 2021 Review date: August 2023