

Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales (CPE)

I am a contact of someone who is a carrier or has an infection – 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’ and 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 is *Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales* spread?

If a patient in hospital is carrying these bacteria it can get into the ward environment and can also be passed on by direct contact with that particular patient. For that reason, the patient will normally be accommodated in a single room. Effective environmental cleaning and good hand hygiene by all, staff and patients, can reduce the risk of spread significantly.

Do I need to be screened?

Occasionally, it isn't immediately known that a patient is carrying these bacteria and so they may not be placed into a single room straightaway. Screening will be offered if you have shared the same bay (or ward) with a patient who has been found to be carrying Carbapenemase producing Enterobacterales. This screening is offered as there is a slight chance that you could have picked up the bacteria and are carrying it too.

How will I be screened for *Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales*?

Screening usually entails taking a rectal swab by inserting it just inside your rectum (bottom). Alternatively, you may be asked to provide a sample of faeces. The swab / sample will be sent to the laboratory and you will normally be informed of the result within two to three days. If the result is negative nothing further is required unless you are staying in hospital for some time. In that case, you will probably be asked to provide a sample on a regular basis e.g. once a week, as a precautionary measure.

What if the result is positive?

If the result is positive do ask your doctor or nurse to explain this to you in more detail. You will be given a single room until you leave hospital. No treatment is necessary unless you have an infection when antibiotics will be given.

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_CPEC_01_LP **Published:** August 2021 **Review date:** August 2023