

Antibiotic- Resistant Organisms

This leaflet gives information about Antibiotic-Resistant Organisms. If you have any questions, please speak to the staff member looking after you.

What are Antibiotic- Resistant Organisms?

Antibiotic-resistant organisms are bacteria (often called “bugs”) that no longer respond to some antibiotics. Some of these bacteria make enzymes, such as ESBL, which break down antibiotics. Others are called multi-drug-resistant organisms (MDROs) or resistant Gram-Negative Organisms (GNOs). These bacteria can live on or inside the body without making you unwell. This is called colonisation or carriage. They can also cause infections in places such as in the urine, wounds, bloods, or lungs. These infections can be harder to treat because fewer antibiotics work against them.

How are they spread?

These bacteria are mainly spread by hands. They can be passed on if staff or visitors have not cleaned their hands properly after contact with a colonised or infected person, or with contaminated equipment. They can also spread on your own hands, for example after using the toilet, especially if you are already carrying these bacteria in your bowel. It is important to clean your hands after using the toilet and before meals. If you need help to clean your hands, please ask a member of staff for support.

What are the signs and symptoms?

There are no signs and symptoms when you are colonised with an antibiotic-resistant organism. If these bacteria cause infection, signs and symptoms will depend on where the infection is. For example, you may develop a fever if the infection is in the blood. The only way to confirm infection caused by an antibiotic-resistant organism is through laboratory testing of a sample such as a wound swab, blood, or urine.

What happens if my result is positive?

If you are in hospital and are found to be colonised or if you have an infection caused by an antibiotic-resistant organism, you may be moved into a single room to help prevent spread to other vulnerable patients. Staff will wear disposable gloves and a plastic apron when caring for you and will clean their hands with soap and water or alcohol hand rub. If you have an infection, you may need antibiotics. If you have no symptoms and are simply colonised, no treatment is required.

Can I have visitors?

Yes. Antibiotic-resistant organisms do not usually cause illness in healthy people, so visitors are a low risk. Visitors should clean their hands before and after touching you or your

surroundings, and again when leaving the ward. They do not need to wear gloves or aprons unless they are helping with your personal care.

When can I go home?

You can go home when you are well enough to be discharged. If you have any concerns once you are home, you may contact your GP for advice.

Contact us

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

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care.

Tel: St Helier 020 8296 2508 / Epsom 01372 735243/ St. Georges 020 8725 2453

Email: ESTH est-tr.PALS@nhs.net / St Georges pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS UK

The NHS 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.

