



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Toolkit for managing carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae in non-acute and community settings

Annex D:

Advice for the family of a person who is a carrier of a carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE)

Where can I find more information?

If you have any concerns or queries you may wish to speak to your healthcare worker or contact your GP for advice. Alternatively, if you would like any further information the Public Health England website is another source of information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/carbapenem-resistance-guidance-data-and-analysis>

Withdrawn: October 2020

What are 'carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae'?

Enterobacteriaceae are bacteria that usually live harmlessly in the gut of humans. 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.

Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae (sometimes abbreviated to CPE) are Enterobacteriaceae which have become resistant to carbapenems, a group of powerful antibiotics. The resistance lies in carbapenemases, enzymes made by some strains of the bacteria that enable them to destroy carbapenem antibiotics and so become resistant to them and most other penicillin-like 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 bacteria resistant to carbapenems can cause problems.

Does carriage of carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae need to be treated?

If a person is a carrier of carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae (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 are needed.

How are carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae spread?

In a hospital or healthcare setting where a patient is carrying this bacterium, the environment can become contaminated and the bacterium can spread to others through direct or indirect contact. Staff work hard to ensure that the environment is kept clean; you will see staff cleaning their hands. If you have any concerns please speak to the staff or your carer.

Are the family at risk of contracting carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae?

Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae are not a risk to healthy people. The most important measure family members can take is to maintain good personal hygiene, including washing hands with soap and water, especially after going to the toilet. Good hygiene such as keeping toilet and bathroom areas clean and using separate towels are the best ways to prevent the spread. Clothes and laundry in the household should be washed normally at the hottest temperature advised on the label.

Will the close family have to be screened for carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae if admitted to hospital?

If admitted to hospital, tell a member of hospital staff that a member of your household is or has been a carrier of carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae. You may be screened for carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae as part of the admission procedure.