Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE)

Information for patients

This leaflet can be made available in other formats including large print, CD and Braille and in languages other than English, upon request.

This leaflet tells you about Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae, sometimes called CPE.

What are Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae?

Enterobacteriaceae are a group of bacteria (germs) that usually live harmlessly in the gut of humans. This is called colonisation and the person is said to be a carrier. Some Enterobacteriaceae have become resistant to antibiotics including those called carbapenems. These bacteria are called Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae. If these bacteria get into the wrong place such as the bladder or bloodstream they can cause infection. As the bacteria are resistant to antibiotics these infections can be very difficult to treat.

Am I at any increased risk from Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae?

You are more at risk of picking up these bacteria if you are treated in a hospital abroad, or in certain areas of the UK, where there have been patients carrying CPE. If you have been in contact with others carrying these bacteria and you are receiving healthcare you may need to be screened (tested) for them. If you are in hospital you will most likely be looked after in an isolation (single) room until the results of your tests are known.

How will I be screened for Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae?

Screening involves inserting a swab just inside your rectum (back passage) and a stool (poo) specimen may also be requested. The specimens will be sent to the laboratory and you will be told of the result as soon as possible. It will take 48 - 72 hours for the germs to grow. You will usually need 3 negative test results before you are moved out of your single room onto the general ward.
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What if I am found to be positive for Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae?

If your tests are positive you will continue to be looked after in a single room while in hospital. If you have an infection with the bacteria, for example, a wound or chest infection, then you will need antibiotic treatment.

If you are receiving healthcare in your own home or in a care home then staff will need to use good hand hygiene while looking after you and to make sure that your surroundings are kept clean also.

If you are carrying the bacteria without being infected then you will not need any treatment. You might still be carrying the bacteria when you go home from hospital but there are no special measures needed, just good hand hygiene. If you have any problems or concerns you may want to consult your GP for advice.

How can the spread of Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae be stopped?

The most important thing is for you to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water especially after using the toilet. Healthcare workers looking after you must use gloves and aprons and wash their hands before putting them on and after taking them off. Your visitors will also be asked to wash their hands on entering and leaving your room and to wear an apron and gloves.

Further information is available from:

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust

Infection Prevention and Control Department
telephone: 01642 383280
Monday – Friday, 8.30 am – 4.30 pm

NHS Choices
telephone: 111 (when it is less urgent than 999)
Calls to this number are free from landlines and mobile phones or via the website at www.nhs.uk
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This leaflet has been produced in partnership with patients and carers. All patient leaflets are regularly reviewed, and any suggestions you have as to how it may be improved are extremely valuable. Please write to the Quality Assurance Team, University Hospital of North Tees or email: patientinformation@nth.nhs.uk

Comments, Concerns, Compliments or Complaints

We are continually trying to improve the services we provide.

We want to know what we’re doing well or if there’s anything which we can improve, that’s why the Patient Experience Team is here to help.

Our Patient Experience Team is here to try to resolve your concerns as quickly as possible. If you would like to contact or request a copy of our PET leaflet, please contact:

- telephone: 01642 624719
  Monday – Friday, 9.00 am – 4.00 pm
  Messages can be left on the answering machine and will be picked up throughout the day.

- freephone: 0800 092 0084
  Mobile: (can use text): 0779 506 1883
  Email: patientexperience@nth.nhs.uk

Out of hours if you wish to speak to a senior member of Trust staff, please contact the hospital switchboard who will bleep the appropriate person.

- telephone: 01642 617617
  24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The Patient Experience Team is available to discuss your concerns in person Monday – Friday, 1.30 pm – 4.30 pm. The office is based on the ground floor at the University Hospital of North Tees.

Data Protection and use of patient information

The Trust has developed a Data Protection Policy in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All of our staff respect this policy and confidentiality is adhered to at all times. If you require further information please contact the Information Governance Team.

- telephone: 01642 833551 or email: information.governance@nth.nhs.uk