

Carbapenamase-producing Enterobacterales (CPE) Factsheet

Information for service users in the community

What are CPE?

CPE are bacteria which usually live harmlessly in the gut of people and are part of our 'good bacteria' (normal flora). The presence of these bacteria without having any symptoms is known as 'colonisation'. A colonised person can also be referred to as a 'carrier'.

However, if these bacteria get into a different part of the body, e.g. the bladder, a wound or bloodstream, they can cause infection.

CPE infections can be difficult to treat because they are resistant to many antibiotics, including the antibiotic Carbapenem, which is used to treat serious infections.

Why have I received this information?

You have tested positive for CPE. The CPE positive result is either from a screening swab taken during a recent hospital admission or from a sample of urine, sputum or a wound swab taken by your hospital doctor, GP or nurse.

How do people get CPE?

CPE can spread from one person to another if hands are not washed thoroughly or by contact with soiled equipment and surfaces such as tables, chairs, door handles.

CPE is common in some hospitals, both in the UK and abroad. People who have been in these hospitals may have picked up CPE from the patients who were carrying it.

Do I need to let any health professionals know?

Yes, you will need to let any health professional know of your CPE result if you or a member of your household are admitted to hospital or if you are attending a hospital appointment. A 'CPE card' may have been provided that includes this information which you can show to any health professional encountered.

Does CPE need to be treated?

The majority of people with CPE are colonised and do not need treatment. With time, it may go away on its own.

If you have an infection, your doctor will discuss antibiotic treatment with a Consultant Microbiologist.

How can I stop CPE from spreading?

- Hand hygiene is **very** important. You should clean your hands regularly using liquid soap and warm water or alcohol handrub, especially after using the toilet or commode, before meals and when they look dirty.
- Visitors to your home, including children, should wash their hands thoroughly with liquid soap and warm water or alcohol handrub before leaving.
- If you have a urinary catheter or a wound, it is important to wash your hands before and after emptying a urine catheter bag or when changing a wound dressing.

Where can I get further information?

Further information can be obtained from your GP, local Community Infection Prevention and Control or UK Health Security Agency Team.