



INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Extended Spectrum Beta-Lactamase Producing Bacteria (ESBL)

Patient Information

What is ESBL?

ESBL are a group of bacteria that produce enzymes called “beta-lactamases”. These enzymes break down commonly used antibiotics, making the bacteria more difficult to treat when it causes an infection.

How do people get ESBL?

ESBL-producing bacteria are found mostly in the bowel. People who have ESBL-producing bacteria in their bowel but do not have an infection, are known to be “colonized”. Even without an infection, ESBL-producing bacteria can be spread to other people directly through touch, if hands are unwashed, or indirectly by contact with soiled equipment and, especially urine-care equipment such as catheters and urinals.

What special precautions are required for ESBL?

It is important that special precautions are taken to stop ESBL from spreading to other patients in the facility. These precautions may include staying in a single room with a sign on the door to remind others of the special precautions. The door may remain open. Everyone who cares for you may be wearing a gown and gloves. Everyone who enters and leaves your room must clean their hands. You should also clean your hands every time you leave your room.

What about family and visitors?

Your family and visitors may visit you. Your family and visitors should not assist other patients with their personal care as this may cause the germ to spread. Your visitors may be required to wear a long-sleeved gown and gloves while in your room. Before leaving your room, visitors must remove the gloves and gown and dispose of them in the garbage container and the linen hamper located in your room. Then they must clean their hands.

Good hand hygiene practices:

Remind all staff and visitors to clean their hands well before and after they touch you. You need to clean your hands:

- after using the bathroom,

- after blowing your nose,
- before eating and drinking,
- before and after you touch your dressing or wounds,
- when your hands are dirty(soiled), and
- before you leave your room.

What will happen at home?

Most of the recommendations for managing ESBL at home are normal hygiene practices. Everyone who might help you with your personal hygiene or with going to the toilet should wash their hands after contact with you. Of course, you must also clean your hands after using the toilet. Always wash your hands before you make any food and before you eat. This practice should be followed by everyone in the household.

Your clothes may be cleaned normally and along with the rest of the laundry in the house. No special cleaning of furniture or dishes is required. If you share a bathroom at home, clean the toilet and sink at least once a week with a household cleaner. Always tell your Doctor, Paramedics, Nurses or other people who care for you that you have ESBL. This helps prevent the spread to others and helps your Doctor choose the right antibiotics if necessary.

You may visit other people and carry on your normal life activities. The most important thing is keeping your hands very clean. If you are planning to visit someone in the hospital, you should talk to the Nurse to make sure you are not placing that person at risk.

If you have questions about the information in this document, contact Queensway Carleton Hospital's Infection Prevention and Control at 613-721-2000, ext. 3777 or Ottawa Public Health:

<https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/diseases.aspx>

Reference:

Public Health Ontario. Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (PIDAC) Best Practices: Annex A- Screening, Testing and Surveillance for Antibiotic-resistant Organisms (AROs) February 2013 ESBL Fact Sheet for Patients and Visitors