



INFECTION PREVENION AND CONTROL

Carbapenenemase Producing Exterobacteriaceae (CPE) Patient Information

What is Carbapenenemase Producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE)?

Enterobacteriaceae are a family of germs (bacteria) that naturally live in our bowels. CPE produces special enzymes that can break down many types of antibiotics, making the germ more difficult to treat. In Canadian hospitals, there are very few infections with CPE, but we have to be careful to make sure they don't increase and spread.

How is CPE spread?

Most people who have CPE have no symptoms of infection and are said to be colonized. CPE is not spread through the air, but may survive on equipment and surfaces, such as bedrails, tables, chairs, countertops and door handles. CPE can be spread from one person to another by dirty hands or from contact with dirty equipment and surfaces. An infection can happen when CPE enters the body in places other than the bowel, and causes symptoms of disease. For example, CPE can cause pneumonia in the lungs, and urinary tract infections in the bladder. Since CPE are resistant to many types of antibiotics, treatment is difficult and may require antibiotics which have worse side effects.

Does CPE go away?

People who have CPE in their bowel will likely carry it for a long time. We don't give treatment if it is not causing an infection, because more antibiotics can make it more resistant. People will be treated if CPE is causing symptoms of infection.

Who is at risk for CPE?

Currently, the biggest risk is being cared for in healthcare settings that have CPE, such as in hospitals along the U.S. eastern seaboard (particularly New York City), Greece, Israel, and India. CPE outbreaks have been seen in hospitals around the world, including Canada. CPE is very common in India, so people who have been there, whether or not they received healthcare, are also at risk.

What special precautions are required for CPE?

If a patient is found to have CPE, roommates and other close patients will be screened for CPE. To prevent the spread of the bacteria:

- the positive patient may be moved to a single room,
- a sign will be placed on the door describing the special precautions, and
- the patient's hospital record will indicate there is CPE.

What about family and visitors?

Family and visitors can visit you if you have CPE. Healthy family and visitors have a low risk of getting an infection with CPE. All visitors must receive education by the staff on how to use the gloves and gowns. We ask that your visitors only visit you and your room. Visitors should:

- not use your bathroom,
- not eat or drink in your room, and
- clean their hands before entering your room and when leaving.

You need to clean your hands:

- after using the bathroom or 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?

It is important to wash hands often at home for 15 seconds each time, especially after using the bathroom and before preparing food. You do not need to do anything special to clean items in your home, such as dishes. Clothing may be washed in the usual manner, along with the rest of the household laundry. If you go to another healthcare facility, visit another Doctor or have home healthcare services you should tell them that you have CPE. They may choose to wear gloves or a gown when providing care. You can go about your normal life activities, but if you plan to visit someone in the hospital, speak to their Nurse to make sure they are not at high risk for a CPE infection.

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 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) January 2013 CPE Fact Sheet for Patients and Visitors