

How can you help?

- Remind all health care workers and visitors to wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand rub before they touch you or are in your room
- Wash your hands well or use alcohol-based hand rub often. When washing your hands turn off the taps with a paper towel to avoid getting hands dirty again
- Do not share personal items that come in contact with their skin such as bar soap, lotions, towels and nail files.
- See a health care provider as soon as possible if an infection is suspected
- If you visit another doctor, hospital, clinic, or receive home care or physical or occupational therapy, it is important for you to tell the staff you have CPE

Good hand hygiene or using alcohol-based hand rub is the best way to prevent the spread of these germs.

What are good hand hygiene practices?

Everyone should practice good hand hygiene at all times. This includes health care workers, individuals positive for CPE, family and visitors. Good hand hygiene practices include cleaning their hands with alcohol-based hand rub (sanitizer) or soap and water for at least 15 seconds.

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Carbapenemase-Producing *Enterobacteriaceae* (CPE)

Information for Client, Family, and Visitors

One of your test results shows you have a germ or bacteria called Carbapenemase-Producing *Enterobacteriaceae* or CPE.

What are *Enterobacteriaceae*?

Enterobacteriaceae are a family of bacteria (germs) many of which live naturally in our bowel. Usually people are not aware of these bacteria and are completely healthy. This is known as colonization. If *Enterobacteriaceae* get “inside” the body, for example, into an open wound, urine or blood, they can cause an infection. These infections can be treated with antibiotics.

What does antibiotic resistant mean?

Antibiotics are drugs used to treat infections caused by germs. Sometimes these drugs will no longer kill the germs and these germs are called antibiotic resistant.

Are special precautions needed?

It is important that special precautions (contact precautions) are taken during a hospital stay and may be taken with a client in a personal care home to stop CPE from spreading to other sick clients.



How did I get CPE?

CPE can spread from one person to another by touch (usually with hands), for example touching, hugging, shaking hands, taking blood pressure, etc. It can be spread by touching surfaces that a person positive for CPE has touched such as door knobs, bed rails, tables, counter tops, water taps or medical equipment. Like many other bacteria, CPE can get into the body if hands are not cleaned before eating or touching the mouth or open wound (contact) or touching something the person positive with CPE has touched. Hospitals are places where bacteria may be passed from one client to another. The most common way to spread CPE is by the unwashed hands of health care workers.

Who gets CPE?

Clients in hospitals who have open wounds, catheters or drainage tubes, and those who are very ill, are most likely to get CPE. Residents in personal care homes are at a lower risk for CPE. Their risk is increased if they are admitted for a long stay in hospital, receive a lot of antibiotics, or have contact with an individual positive for CPE or with equipment that is contaminated with CPE. Clients receiving care in community settings are not at risk of getting CPE.

What about at home?

At home, the chance of spreading CPE to family is small. There are no special precautions at home except:

- Wash your hands often, including before preparing food, before eating and after using the toilet
- Shower or bathe regularly
- Have your own towels, clothes and bed sheets
- Do not share grooming items such as nail scissors, tweezers, razors and toothbrushes
- Keep sores or wounds covered, if you share a bed with someone

What are the special precautions?

Some of the precautions may include:

- Having the client remain in a private room
- A sign placed on the door of the room to alert everyone of the precautions needed
- Everyone must wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand rub (sanitizer) when entering and leaving the room, or area of care
- If the client has to leave the room, their hands must be washed well or an alcohol-based hand rub used as well as skin wounds covered
- Use of long sleeved gown and gloves by caregivers
- If the client is in the hospital they may not be able to go to other areas of the hospital or to the cafeteria
- In a long-term care or transitional care facility, precautions may include the above if the person has an infection with CPE and it cannot be contained (e.g. covering a wound with a dressing)

What about family and visitors?

Family and friends can visit but they will be asked to wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand rub before entering and leaving the room. They also may be asked to wear a gown and gloves when entering the room. Before leaving the room, visitors then must remove the gown and gloves and dispose of them as directed by staff. Visitors may still have close contact such as hugging, kissing and handholding. The risk of CPE being spread to healthy family and friends is very low.

What is Carbapenemase-Producing *Enterobacteriaceae* (CPE)?

Carbapenemase-producing *Enterobacteriaceae* (CPE) produce a carbapenemase enzyme that can break down many types of antibiotics, making the bacteria antibiotic resistant. CPE does not harm healthy people including pregnant women, children and babies. People with CPE do not look or feel different from anyone else.