

# **CPE screening**

## **Information for patients**

If you have any questions about the information provided in this leaflet, it is very important that you discuss these with a member of the nursing or medical team caring for you.

## **Understanding CPE**

The gut of every normal, healthy human contains bacteria called Enterobacteriaceae. While they are in the gut, they cause no harm and help us digest our food. This is called colonisation. However, if these bacteria get into the wrong place, such as the bladder or bloodstream, they can cause infection.

Carbapenemase-Producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE) are a strain of these Enterobacteriaceae. They have developed a resistance to a powerful group of antibiotics called carbapenems. Carbapenems are an important group of antibiotics that doctors often rely on to fight infections where treatment with other antibiotics has failed. It's important that we stop the spread of CPE in our hospitals. This will make sure that these antibiotics continue to be available to treat infections in the future.

### **If I have CPE, will I need treatment?**

No, not normally. Patients who have CPE in their body do not need to be treated as these bacteria live harmlessly in the gut, without causing problems. However, if you have an infection caused by CPE, you will need antibiotics to treat it.

## **Information about CPE screening**

### **Why are patients screened for CPE?**

By knowing which patients are carrying CPE, we can make sure that they receive the best care to prevent the spread of CPE and to prevent CPE infections.

Infections caused by CPE can be difficult to treat. It is very important to know that someone is carrying CPE so that if an infection develops, medical staff can quickly identify the best antibiotic to treat it.

### **How are patients screened for CPE?**

Patients who are admitted to acute hospitals in Scotland are assessed at the time of admission to decide if they are at risk of carrying CPE. You may be asked to be screened for CPE if you have:

- been in a hospital outside Scotland; or
- been identified as having CPE in the past.

You may also be asked to be screened if you have been in contact with someone with CPE during your stay in hospital.

### **How will I be tested for CPE?**

If you need a sample to be taken for testing, a member of your care team will insert a swab a small distance into your rectum (bottom). Or, they may test a sample of faeces (poo). Some other samples may be needed, for example if you have a wound or urinary catheter.

Your privacy and dignity will be respected at all times when these samples are being taken.

All swabs and samples will be sent to the laboratory to see which bacteria grow, and your care team will tell you the results.

You may be asked to stay in a single room until the result of your test is known.

## **Information for patients with a positive CPE test**

### **What happens if my CPE test is positive?**

If your screening test for CPE is positive, it means you are carrying CPE bacteria. This does not normally cause problems in people who are fit and healthy and you may not suffer any ill effects. If you are showing no signs of infection, no treatment is needed.

If you do get an infection, it is very helpful for your doctor to know that you are carrying CPE. This means that they can identify the best antibiotic to treat your infection quickly.

If your CPE screening test is positive, you may be tested for CPE each week for as long as you stay in hospital.

### **While I am in hospital, what will be done to prevent and control infection?**

You may be asked to stay in a single room during your hospital stay or until your doctors are satisfied that there is no risk of spreading CPE to other patients.

The most important thing you can do to prevent infection is to wash your hands well with soap and water after going to the toilet. You can also use alcohol-based hand rub. It is also essential that you avoid touching any of your medical devices such as urinary catheters or intravenous drips. This will help reduce the risk of you developing an infection caused by CPE.

### **Can I still have visitors?**

Patients with CPE can still have visitors in hospital. Visitors who may be more vulnerable to infection, children and babies are advised to avoid visiting. All visitors must wash their hands when they enter and leave your room.

### **What happens when I leave hospital?**

If you are carrying CPE when you leave hospital, this may go away over time. You do not need to take any extra precautions at home other than washing your hands well with soap and water, especially after going to the toilet. If a relative or friend is helping care for you at home, it is essential that they wash their hands with soap and water before and after they give care to you. Bed linen, clothes, and other laundry can be washed as normal.

If you go back into hospital or another healthcare environment, it is important that you let the staff caring for you know that you have had a positive test for CPE in the past. This will make sure that you are tested again and receive the best care to prevent the spread of CPE and to reduce the risk of you developing a CPE infection.

## **Where can I get more information?**

If you would like more information, please speak to a member of the nursing or medical team caring for you, who may contact the local Infection Prevention and Control team on your behalf.

Please use the space below to write any questions that you may have for the team caring for you.

This leaflet is available in other languages, as well as in large print, easy read and Braille (English only).

To ask for a copy of this leaflet in another language or format, please contact Health Protection Scotland:

[NSS.HPSHAIScreening@nhs.net](mailto:NSS.HPSHAIScreening@nhs.net)

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