



## CPE: Information for patients

### Summary

CPE is a type of bacteria that is resistant to antibiotics. Infections caused by CPE can be serious and are very difficult to treat.

CPE stands for carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales.

### Why is CPE a problem?



CPE is a problem because it is resistant to many antibiotics, resulting in limited options to treat infections caused by CPE. The antibiotics that may work can also have side effects.

Carrying CPE in your body is different to having an infection caused by CPE. Some people carry CPE in their gut and remain healthy and do not require any treatment. If CPE moves from the gut to another part of the body, you may develop an infection and require treatment.

### Testing for CPE



If you have symptoms of a CPE infection, your doctor may decide to test for it.

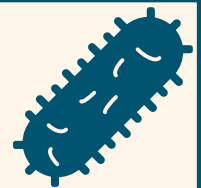
They may collect a blood, faeces or urine sample or take a wound swab. If the test shows you have CPE, your nurse or doctor will talk to you about the results and the next steps in your care.

### Screening for CPE

Screening means testing people to see if they carry CPE, even if they don't have symptoms.

You may be offered screening if you are at higher risk of carrying CPE.

### How are people infected with CPE?



CPE can spread between people by unwashed hands, or from contact with contaminated surfaces and medical equipment. CPE can cause urinary tract infections and bloodstream infections.

### Your risk of getting an infection caused by CPE is higher if you have:

- recently had a long hospital stay or been in intensive care
- received medical care overseas or in a hospital where there were a lot of patients with CPE infections
- been treated with a long course of antibiotics for an extended period of time, or used a lot of different antibiotics
- had chemotherapy in the last 12 months
- an indwelling medical device currently in place (such as a catheter)
- had an organ or stem cell transplant
- have diabetes
- had CPE in the past.



## What if my CPE test is positive?

If your test result is positive, it means you are either carrying or are infected with CPE.

If you have an infection, your doctor will work with a laboratory to try to identify the best antibiotics to treat you.

You may be tested again after 12 months to see if you are still carrying CPE.

Your doctor will advise you if you need to be tested again if your situation changes

## Preventing the spread after you leave hospital if you have CPE



To prevent the spread of CPE to other people, you should:

- wash your hands with soap and water regularly and dry them, especially:
  - after going to the toilet
  - before preparing and eating food
  - after touching animals
- use your own towels and face cloths and do not share them
- not share grooming items, such as brushes, nail scissors, or razors
- cover any skin wounds if possible.

## Preventing the spread in hospital if you have CPE



If you have tested positive for CPE, hospital staff will use specific precautions to reduce the risk of spreading CPE to other patients. These may include:

- caring for you in a single room with your own toilet
- wearing a gown and gloves while they are caring for you
- frequently cleaning your room, bathroom and medical equipment
- using signage to let others know to take precautions.

You can help prevent spreading CPE to other patients by:

- regularly washing your hands with soap and water, or using an alcohol-based hand rub
- staying in your room, unless you are moved for tests or treatment.

## Can I have visitors in hospital?



If you have CPE, you can still have visitors. All your visitors should wash their hands with soap and water, or an alcohol-based sanitiser before and after the visit.

People who have long-term health problems can become very unwell if they get CPE, so talk with your doctor or nurse if someone with a long-term health problem is planning to visit you.



## Questions?

If you have any questions, you can:

- ask your doctor or nurse
- ask to speak with someone from the hospital's infection control team
- visit: [www.safetyandquality.gov.au/cpe-guide](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/cpe-guide)