



# Information for patient contacts of a known CPE carrier readmitted to hospital

## Carbapenem Producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE)

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### What is CPE?

**Enterobacteriaceae** is the name given to a family of bacteria that normally lives in our bowel. A well-known Enterobacteriaceae you may have heard of is *Escherichia coli* or *E. coli*.

**Carbapenems** are a group of antibiotics that usually work against these bacteria. But some bacteria have become hard to treat because these antibiotics no longer work – the bacteria have become resistant to the antibiotics. These bacteria are called **Carbapenem Producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE)**.

### How do you get CPE?

In New Zealand, CPE infections are rare. When people do get a CPE infection, it often has been picked up when the person has had medical care overseas. CPE is found in patients in hospitals and clinics around the world, but particularly in Greece, India and South-East Asia.

Healthy people do not usually get CPE infections. However, it is important to know that people may carry CPE in their bowel or in a wound, without symptoms.

People who carry CPE are at risk of getting a CPE infection if they have an operation (especially on the prostate) or need treatment involving ventilators, catheters, or intravenous drips.

People who have taken some antibiotics for long periods of time are also at risk of developing CPE infections.

### Why am I being screened for CPE?

You have been identified as a patient who previously shared a ward bedroom with another patient who has since been found to be a carrier for CPE. You may also therefore be at risk of being a CPE carrier so screening will be arranged while you are in hospital on this visit.

Your care will not be affected by the investigation and clinical staff will take routine infection control precautions with your care.

### What does CPE screening mean?

Screening usually entails taking a rectal swab by inserting it just inside your rectum (bottom). Alternatively, you may be asked to provide a sample of faeces. The swab / sample will be sent to the laboratory and you will normally be informed of the result within two to three days.

### What happens if the result is positive?

If the result is positive, do ask your doctor or nurse to explain this to you in more detail. You will be accommodated in a single room with your own toilet /commode whilst in hospital. If you have an infection,

you will need to have antibiotics. However, if there are no signs of infection and you are simply 'carrying' the bacteria, no treatment is required.

Accommodating you in a single room, if the result is positive, helps to prevent spread of the bacteria. Healthcare workers should clean their hands regularly. They will use gloves and aprons when caring for you.

The most important measure for you to take is to wash your hands well with soap and water, especially after going to the toilet. You should avoid touching medical devices (if you have any) such as your urinary catheter tube and your intravenous drip, particularly at the point where it is inserted into the body or skin. Visitors will be asked to clean their hands on entering and leaving the room.

### Where can I get more information?

If you have any questions, speak to your nurse or doctor. The hospital's infection prevention and control team can also provide further information.

Hutt Valley DHB Infection Prevention & Control Service: 04 570 9069, or 0276114573.