Carbapenamase Producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE)

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What are Carbapenamase Producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE)?

CPEs are bacteria (germs) that carry an enzyme that make them resistant to a group of powerful antibiotics called carbapenems. These antibiotics are often used in hospitals to treat severe infection. If a germ has the enzyme they can be difficult to treat.

Why am I being offered screened for CPEs?

We offer screening for CPEs to patient’s that have had an overnight stay in a hospital overseas in the past 12 months, have had healthcare in a hospital located in Manchester, or those that have been in contact with another patient with a CPE. Nursing staff will explain the reasons to you.

Who is at risk of an infection with a CPE?

People who have had an overnight stay in a hospital overseas or in Manchester. There is a small risk if you have had contact with a patient that has a CPE in other hospitals.

What infections can CPEs cause?

These bacteria (germs) can cause infections such as bladder or kidney infections, pneumonia, wound infections or infections of the bloodstream, but they mostly cause no symptoms and live harmlessly on the skin or in your bowel.

How is a CPE infection be treated?

There are antibiotics available to treat these infections but the choice is extremely limited and the antibiotics normally must be given via a drip, which is why we are doing everything we can to limit the spread of these bacteria.
When will the results of screening be known?
The results will take up to 10 days, if you do not hear anything from us by that time then your test is negative.

If I am found to be infected with a CPE infection what will this mean for my hospital care?
All patients who have tested positive for a CPE infection will be placed in isolation with isolation precautions. The isolation precautions are to prevent the spread of CPE among vulnerable hospital patients, many of whom have severe underlying medical problems and are at risk of infection with a CPE infection. Hospital staff will wear aprons and gloves to care for you. Visitors should report to the nurses’ station for advice on what they are required to do before entering your room. The CPE infection will not restrict you from receiving any medical care that you need. Please remember that hand washing is a key method to prevent the spread of any infection.

What will happen when I go home?
At home, in most cases, you need only to use good hand hygiene. The nursing staff will give you discharge instructions. Your laundry can be washed normally with the rest of the household wash.
The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm