

IPC NEWS

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Edition 2: CPE

Carbapenemase-Producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE)



What does Carbapenemase-Producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE) mean?

Enterobacteriaceae are bacteria that usually live harmlessly in the gut of humans. This is called colonisation (a person is said to be a 'carrier'). However, if the bacteria get into the wrong place, such as the bladder or bloodstream they can cause infection. Carbapenems are one of the most powerful types of antibiotics. Carbapenemases are enzymes (chemicals), made by some strains of these bacteria, which allow them to destroy carbapenem antibiotics and so the bacteria are said to be resistant to the antibiotics.

Why does CPE resistance matter?

Carbapenems are a valuable family of antibiotics normally reserved for serious infections. Until now, they have been the antibiotics that doctors could always rely upon when other antibiotics failed. However infections caused by CPE can be difficult to treat with antibiotics. Steps need to be taken to prevent the infection spreading to other people.

Does carriage/colonisation need to be treated?

If a person is a carrier of CPE they do not need to be treated. However if the bacteria have caused an infection then antibiotics will be required. CPE is

resistant to a number of antibiotics, which can make it difficult to treat.

How do you get CPE?

CPE can be found living harmlessly in the gut of humans, so it can be difficult to say when or where it was picked up. However, there is an increased chance of picking up these bacteria if your patient has been a patient in a hospital abroad or in a UK hospital that has had patients carrying the bacteria, or if your patient has been in contact with a carrier elsewhere. Hospitals are now screening for CPE based upon local risk assessment, so you may see more patients diagnosed with CPE than before.

How can CPE be eradicated from the body?

There is no treatment to eradicate CPE, sometimes the body will clear these organisms as part of its

natural process, but if this does not happen they are unlikely to cause patient harm unless they cause infection.

How do you prevent the spread of CPE?

The same as every other infection, by good infection control standard precautions as you should do every day with every patient. Antibiotics are becoming less effective, so prevention is key in the fight against spreading bugs!

CPE is likely to be colonised in the gut therefore it is important to wash your hands:

- before preparing or eating food
- after using the toilet
- after touching any wounds or medical devices
- remember 'WHO 5 moments hand hygiene'

For more information visit: <http://ow.ly/3UDA30a6xlm>

Break the chain of infection – help stop the spread of CPE

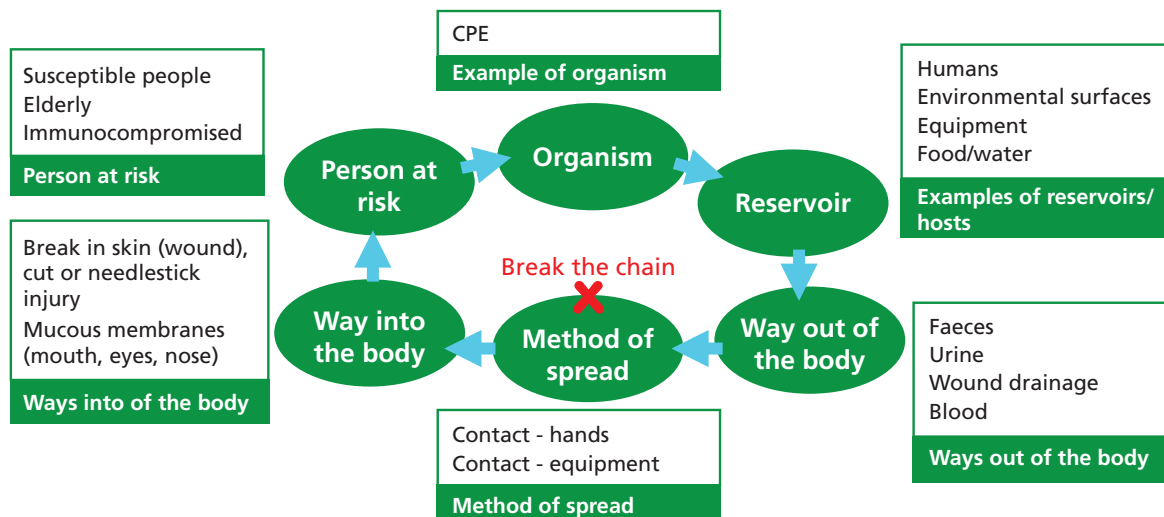
Who is at risk?

People who have:

- chronic medical conditions
- recent or prolonged stays in healthcare settings
- invasive medical devices
- a history of taking antibiotics for a long period of time



It is important to inform clinicians of the CPE status and document in the patient's health records for prudent use of antibiotics.



What would you like to see in our next newsletter?

Let us know by email to IPC.wirralct@nhs.net or call 0151 604 7750.

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