

### Where can I find more information?

If you have any concerns or queries you may wish speak to your healthcare worker or contact your GP for advice. Alternatively, if you would like any further information the Public Health England website is another source of information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/carbapenem-resistance-guidance-data-and-analysis>



Public Health  
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

## **Toolkit for Managing Carbapenemase -producing Enterobacteriaceae in Non-acute and Community Settings**

### **Annex B:**

Advice for individuals receiving care at home who have an infection with or are colonised by carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae

## What does 'carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae' 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 carbapenem resistance matter?

Carbapenem antibiotics can only be given in hospital directly into the bloodstream. Until now, doctors have relied on them to successfully treat certain 'difficult' infections when other antibiotics have failed to do so. Therefore, in a hospital or other care setting, where there are many vulnerable patients, spread of these resistant bacteria can cause problems.

## Does carriage of carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae need to be treated?

If a person is a carrier of carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae (sometimes called CPE), they do not need to be treated. As mentioned, these bacteria can live harmlessly in the gut. However, if the bacteria have caused an infection then antibiotics will be required. Please do ask your doctor or healthcare worker to explain your situation to you in more detail.

## How can the spread of carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae be prevented?

The most important measure you can take is to maintain good hand hygiene, washing your hands well with soap and water, especially after going to the toilet. You should avoid touching any medical devices (such as your urinary catheter tube or other medical tubes) if you have any, particularly at the point where it is inserted into the body or skin.

As you are receiving care in your own home, you should not restrict your lifestyle in any way, however a few sensible measures will prevent spread to others. As well as good hand hygiene, keeping toilet and bathroom areas clean, and using separate towels, are the best ways to prevent spread. You should expect that visiting healthcare workers will wash their hands on arrival, before and after providing direct care, and on leaving. They will use gloves and an apron when caring for you.

## What about my family and visitors?

There is no need for you to advise visitors that you are a carrier or have an infection, as long as hygiene measures are adequate. If you have an infection, it is important to work with your healthcare worker to ensure that any discharge from a wound, for example, is contained within an appropriate dressing to prevent contamination of clothes or soft furnishings.

You may wish to ask your doctor or nurse to give you a letter or card advising that you have had an infection or been colonised with carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae. This will be useful for the future and it is important that you make health care staff aware of it. Should you or a member of your household be admitted to hospital, you should let the hospital staff know that you are, or have been, a carrier and show them the letter / card.