

Carbapenemase-producing *Enterobacteriaceae* (CPE)

What is it?

- *Enterobacteriaceae* are a family of bacteria (germs), many of which live naturally in our bowels. Carbapenemase-producing *Enterobacteriaceae* (CPE) produce enzymes that can break down many types of antibiotics (medications) making the bacteria very hard to treat.

How does it colonize?

- People can be “carriers” of CPE. This is known as colonization. The main site of colonization is the bowel. Most people who are colonized with CPE have no symptoms of infection.
- People who have CPE in their bowel will likely carry it for a long time.

How is it spread?

- CPE is spread by direct or indirect contact with the site of infection. It is not spread through the air. CPE can be spread from one person to another by unwashed hands or from contact with soiled equipment and surfaces.
- Infection occurs when CPE enters the body at specific sites and causes symptoms of disease

What are the symptoms?

- CPE can cause infections if the bacteria gain access to sterile body sites (e.g., lungs, bladder, blood stream)
- CPE can cause hard to treat infections in any part of the body including pneumonia, bloodstream infections, stomach infections, and bladder infections.

Who gets it?

- The major risk factor for getting a CPE infection is receiving health care in a health care facility that has CPE (e.g., hospitals on the eastern U.S. coast, Greece, Israel and the Indian subcontinent). CPE outbreaks have been seen in hospitals in Canada.
- People who have visited the Indian subcontinent are also at risk of getting CPE

How is it treated?

- People with CPE symptoms of infection may require treatment with antibiotics (medications) prescribed by their healthcare provider. People who are colonized with CPE generally do not require treatment.

What precautions should I take at home?

- Practice good thorough handwashing, especially after using the washroom, after contact with the infected area, and before preparing food.
- All household members should practice good hand hygiene as well.
- Routine cleaning and disinfection of the home environment can continue in the usual manner.
- Laundering clothes with the rest of the household laundry is sufficient.
- Notify all health care workers who are providing care of the CPE colonization or infection.

For further information, please contact the Communicable Disease Control Program staff at 705-474-1400 or 1-800-563-2808, ext 5229.

References:

[Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee. Feb. 2013. Annex to Routine Practices and Additional Precautions. Annex A: Screening, Testing and Surveillance for Antibiotic-Resistant Organisms \(AROs\) in all Health Care Settings. Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Toronto, Canada.](#)

http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/RPAP_Annex_A_CPE_Information_Sheet_2013.pdf

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