



## Carbapenem Resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE): Contact with CRE

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CRE stands for 'Carbapenem Resistant Enterobacteriaceae'. These are bacteria that usually live harmlessly in the gut of some people. 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. So CRE are strains of these bacteria which are resistant to the antibiotics.

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. In a hospital, where there are many vulnerable patients, spread of resistant bacteria can cause problems.

Occasionally, it isn't immediately known that a patient is carrying these bacteria and so they may not be placed into a single room straight away. Screening will be offered if you have shared the same bay (or ward) with a patient who has been found to be carrying CRE. This screening is offered as there is a slight chance that you could have picked up these bacteria and are carrying CRE too.

Screening usually involves 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. If the result is negative, the doctors or nurses may wish to check that a further two samples are negative before you can be accommodated on the main ward. These measures will not hinder your care in any way. If all results are negative no further actions are required.

If the result is positive, please ask your doctor or nurse to explain this to you in more detail. You will be accommodated in a single room 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.

If you have any queries, please contact the infection prevention and control department based at North Devon District Hospital, on **01271 322680**.

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

## **PALS**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email [ndht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.pals@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

## **Have your say**

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

