What are Carbapenemase Producing Organisms?

Which organisms produce Carbapenemase?
This particular type of organism comes from a family of bacteria (germs) normally found harmlessly in the gut. When they cause no harm this is referred to as a carrier, also known as colonisation. Sometimes, in the wrong place, these bacteria can cause infections such as urinary tract or blood stream infections. These infections can usually be treated successfully with antibiotics. This only becomes a problem if these germs develop a resistant to antibiotics.

What is Carbapenemase?
Over time many bacteria have become resistant to commonly used antibiotics. Some bacteria develop several resistances and this leaves us with fewer antibiotics to treat infections with. Bacteria which produce Carbapenemase are resistant to a group of antibiotics known as carbapenems, which are usually used for treating serious infections.

Why does carbapenem resistance matter?
Carbapenem antibiotics can only be given in a hospital directly into the bloodstream. Until now, doctors have relied on them to successfully treat infections that have not responded to other antibiotics.

Can they be easily spread?
Yes. They are easily spread by person to person contact. Good hand hygiene, particularly after using the toilet, remains an effective way of preventing spread of germs. Reducing possible spread to other patients can be achieved by caring for people carrying this type of resistant bacteria in a single room. In a hospital, where there are many vulnerable patients, spread of these resistant bacteria can cause problems.

Is it infectious?
No, not in the usual sense such as with the common cold or influenza but it is readily spread and may subsequently lead to infections especially when a patient undergoes certain medical procedures as part of their care.

How can it be picked up?
There is a higher chance of picking up a Carbapenemase producing organism if you have been in a hospital abroad or a UK hospital where they have patients carrying the bacteria.
I am colonised/have an infection - what does this mean?

Do I need to be treated?
If a person is a carrier (also known as colonisation) of a Carbapenem producing organism with no sign of infection they do not need to be treated. However, if the bacteria has caused an infection then antibiotics may be required.

What is the treatment?
Carbapenemase producing organisms are difficult to treat as the bacteria is resistant to many antibiotics. Your doctor will prescribe the most effective antibiotic for your infection.

Will it impact my hospital treatment?
No, your hospital treatment will go ahead as planned but you may be last on a procedure or operating list so that cleaning of the environment can take place after you have had your procedure / surgery.

How will I be cared for whilst in hospital?
Your care will be planned the same as it would have been if you were not positive to a Carbapenemase producing organism however there will be some differences to prevent spread of these bacteria.

You will be accommodated in a single room, preferably with ensuite facilities. If ensuite facilities are not available then a commode will be provided to stay in your room for your own use. Staff and visitors will continue to wear gowns and gloves when they are in your room and caring for you.

You will be asked to provide samples on a weekly basis during your stay. The samples might include a number of swabs from areas such as where your drip (if you have one) enters the skin, a sample of urine if you have a urinary catheter and either a stool specimen or a rectal swab.

What can I do?
You should avoid touching medical devices (if you have any) such as a urinary catheter or intravenous drip, particularly at the point where it enters your body. If you do need to clean your urinary catheter site you must wash your hands with soap and water thoroughly both before and afterwards.

Can I have visitors when I am in hospital?
Carbapenemase producing organisms are not a risk to healthy people and so we encourage you to have visitors but they will need to wear gloves and aprons. Visitors should wash their hands carefully before leaving your room and staff will advise them not to visit other patients on the ward. If they do need to visit another ward or department we advise they do that first.

What about when I go home?
No special measures or treatment are required; any infection will have been treated prior to your discharge. You will not be required to take any extra precautions when at home and around members of your family. You should carry on as normal, but continue with good hand hygiene. If you have any concerns you may wish to contact your GP for advice.

Before you leave hospital, ask the doctor or nurse if you need help to complete the last page on this information leaflet and remember to take it home with you. 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 leaflet.
Where can I find more information?

If you would like any further information please speak to a member of your care staff, who may also contact the Infection Prevention & Control Team for you. The Public Health England website is also another source of information:

www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ?CarbapenemResistance/

This patient has been screened for a Carbapenemase producing organism at The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch NHS Foundation Trust and found to be positive

Name:  Date of birth:  
Hospital Number:  
Date of positive result:  
Site/s of positive result: 

Our mission
Providing the excellent care we would expect for our own families.

The Royal Bournemouth Hospital,  
Castle Lane East, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH7 7DW

The Bournemouth Hospital Charity raises funds for the Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals to enhance patient care and purchase items which directly benefit patients and staff above and beyond that which can be funded by the NHS alone. If you would like to contribute to the Bournemouth Hospital Charity please contact them on 01202 704060, email charity@rbch.nhs.uk or visit www.bournemouthhospitalcharity.org.

If you have any queries or concerns about your care at the Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) would be happy to help you and can be contacted on 01202 704886/704301 or pals@rbch.nhs.uk.

If you would like this leaflet printed in a larger font, please contact the Communications Team on 01202 704905 during the office hours of 8.30am-5pm Monday - Friday.

Author: Kate Crowther
Date: June 2017  Version: Two  Review date: June 2020  Ref: 176/14

Website: www.rbch.nhs.uk  Tel: 01202 303626