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You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

Please complete The Friends & Family Test to tell us about your experience at: www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily or download our App from the Apple App store or Google Play Store.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

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Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae I am a contact – what does this mean?

What are 'carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae'?

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

Do I need treatment?

If someone is a carrier of carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE), they do not need to be treated. However, if the bacteria have caused an infection then antibiotics will be required.

How is CPE spread?

If a patient in hospital is carrying this bacteria it can get into the ward environment and can also be passed on by direct contact with that particular patient. For that reason, the patient will normally be cared for in a single room. Effective environmental cleaning and good hand hygiene by all, staff and patients, can reduce the risk of spread significantly.

Do I need to be screened?

Occasionally, it isn't immediately known that a patient is carrying this bacteria and so they may not be placed into a single room straight away.

Infection Control Team

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Screening will be offered if you have shared the same bay (or ward) with a patient who has been found to be carrying CPE. This screening is offered as there is a slight chance that you could have picked up the bacteria and are carrying it too.

How will I be screened?

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 or sample will be sent to the laboratory and you will normally be informed of the result within 2 to 3 days. If the result is negative nothing further is required unless you are staying in hospital for some time. In that case, you will probably be asked to provide a sample every week, as a precautionary measure.

What if the result is positive?

If the result is positive your doctor or nurse will explain this to you in more detail and to give you a leaflet about this. You will be given a single room until you leave hospital. No treatment is necessary unless you have an infection when antibiotics will be given.

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 and Control Team for you.

The Public Health England website is another source of information:

www.hpa.org.uk