

Carbapenemase-Producing Organisms (CPO)

Information for patients and families

Read this pamphlet to learn more about:

- What CPO is
- How CPO spreads
- What happens when you have CPO in hospital
- How to prevent the spread of CPO at home



What are Carbapenemase-Producing Organisms (CPO)?

CPO are germs that live in the gut but have become resistant to the antibiotics we use to treat infections.

Some people have CPO in their gut, but it does not cause them any problems. They do not have symptoms or illness, but they can pass the germs to other people.

Because they have become resistant to antibiotics, CPO can cause infections that are very difficult to treat.

This is why we must take extra care to prevent the spread of CPO within the hospital.

Who can have CPO?

Anyone can carry CPO. People are more likely to carry CPO or get an infection if they have:

- had CPO before
- been in contact with others who have CPO
- come from another country where CPO is common
- travelled to an area where CPO is common
- stayed in a hospital where CPO is common

How do you get CPO?

CPO is spread by contact with a person or surface that has CPO. It is not spread through the air. Without taking precautions, CPO could spread easily from person to person in the hospital.

**In the hospital,
we take extra
precautions
to prevent the
spread of CPO.**

How do you know who has CPO?

If you are admitted to certain areas of the hospital, we take a swab from your bottom (rectum) and send it to the lab for testing. The results are available in 2 to 3 days. This is called screening.

What happens if I have CPO?

If you carry a CPO or we think you may have it, these precautions are followed:

- You will be moved to a single room. This is called isolation. It is an important way to prevent spreading CPO to other people.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water (or use alcohol-based hand gel), especially after using the bathroom.
- A sign is placed on the door with instructions for all staff and visitors.
- Everyone entering your room will wear a gown and gloves.
- We will provide your care in your room. You may only leave the room with permission. Before leaving the room you must wash your hands.
- We will clean and disinfect the surfaces and equipment in your room.
- If you carry a CPO, no treatment is needed. If you have an infection from a CPO, your doctor will treat it.

Can I have visitors?

Yes, your family and friends are welcome to visit you. They must follow our visiting rules and the instructions from staff and the signs posted on your door.

Your visitors must take these precautions:

- Before entering your room, your visitors must put on a gown and gloves.
- Your visitors must stay in your room. They should not use your bathroom.
- Before leaving your room, your visitors must take off their gloves and gown and wash their hands with soap and water (or use the alcohol-based hand gel).

Is my family at risk when I go home?

Once you have CPO, you might have it for a long time. By taking precautions, there is a low risk of spreading it to your family. Healthy people do not usually get CPO infections.

What precautions should I take at home?

To prevent the spread of CPO at home:

- Everyone in your home should wash their hands often.
- Wash dishes and laundry as usual. Hot water and dish or laundry detergent clean well enough.
- Clean surfaces such as counters, sinks and cupboards with a soap or disinfectant.

Whenever you need health care at home or at a doctor's office, clinic or hospital, tell the staff that you have had CPO. If you have visiting nurses, they may wear gloves and/or a gown to protect themselves and prevent spreading the germs to others.

If you have questions or concerns about preventing infection, ask your nurse to call Infection Prevention and Control.



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