

# CRE PATIENT FACT SHEET

**Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacterales (CRE)** are a family of bacteria that are very difficult to treat, due to their high level of resistance to antibiotics (including carbapenem antibiotics). *Klebsiella* species and *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) are examples of Enterobacterales, a normal bacteria found in the human gut, that can become carbapenem-resistant.

**CRE pose a problem** when they spread outside of the gut and cause serious infections such as pneumonia or bloodstream, wound, and urinary tract infections. Because some CRE bacteria have become resistant to most available antibiotics, infections can be very difficult to treat and can even be deadly. Colonized individuals carry CRE on their bodies without it causing an infection and can spread CRE to others.

**CRE are spread** from person to person through contact with individuals who are infected or colonized with CRE- particularly contact with wounds or stool.

**Individuals at risk for CRE** are often immunocompromised and/or patients in the healthcare setting; especially those who have invasive medical devices or are taking certain antibiotics. **Healthy people do not usually get CRE infections.**



**CRE treatment** decisions will be made by your doctor on a case-by-case basis after it has been determined through lab tests which antibiotics work best to treat the infection. Doctors may have limited antibiotics that will kill CRE. Individuals who are colonized do not need treatment.

## How can I protect myself from CRE?

- If you are prescribed antibiotics, take them exactly as your healthcare provider (HCP) recommends. Be sure to finish the full course even if you start to feel better.
- Make sure all HCPs clean their hands before caring for you. If you don't see your HCPs clean their hands, ask them to do so.
- Clean your own hands often, and ask anyone taking care of you to clean their hands:
  - Before preparing or eating food
  - Before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth
  - Before handling medical devices or touching tubes going into your body
  - Before and after changing wound dressings or bandages
  - After using the bathroom
  - After blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Avoid preventable infections by making sure you are up to date on all recommended vaccinations.
- Tell your HCP if you have been hospitalized in another healthcare facility, including hospitals in other countries.



## What should people who have tested positive for CRE do after leaving healthcare facilities?

People who have tested positive for CRE should inform healthcare providers when visiting healthcare offices and when being admitted to hospitals and nursing homes.

**CRE prevention falls on everyone. Expect all of your healthcare providers and caretakers to clean their hands.**

For more information visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/hai/organisms/cre/cre-patients.html>